

DEPRECIATIONS
W.B. RUSSELL HERTS



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DEPRECIATIONS

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B. RUSSELL HERTS

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To EDWARD GOODMAN
my friend

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EXPLANATION

Some of these essays were written before this volume was contemplated, but almost all are aimed at a revision of accepted values. They are given their collective title of Depreciations because the people and ideas depreciated are all, in my opinion, ones overvalued by our generation.

I do not imagine that I have cut in pieces either the one or the other. This book is a sword-thrust that may, indeed, be no more than a pen-prick. Moore, Yeats, Bennett, Wells, Chesterton and the rest remain imposing, and so I recognize them; marriage, religion, the effort at fundamentalities and finalities, these too remain important to humanity. I have merely given expression to my present personal reaction to them; I may feel differently in a year—and then there may be another book for you to read.

But for the moment I offer only these essays as an offensive and defensive expression of my opinion, and I hope they may provoke a corresponding activity on the part of those who cannot accept them; for by such encounters the truth, or as much of it as is necessary for us at any one time, comes to prevail.

B. R. H.

20 West 57th Street, New York.

THE IMPORT OF THE SUPERFICIAL

The world has become noisy with fundamentalities. Everywhere we see little people strutting about looking for the bottoms of things. Folk whose fathers were content to dabble around in their own particular set of stupidities without speculating much further than the following Saturday's payroll are now discussing problems and movements and fundamental things generally.

Dissatisfaction with things as they exist is pretty general and the little people have started out to adjust it and bring to solution the difficulties of the ages. The expense in good black ink and good heavy paper to which the world has been put to publish the panaceas of perplexed nonentities has never been so great as it is to-day. The stage is largely occupied by puerile problem plays while the press is compelled by popular demand to dispense still more puerile propaganda articles. The cults and the isms are thriving and any one can

start a movement who has six personal friends, a studio and a touch of paranoia.

So we have all these little people roving the realms of sociology, science, philosophy and morals, with big black spectacles fastened to their craning faces and geological hammers ready to knock off projections everywhere on our later half-petrified formations, and to get down to what they expect will be bed-rock. We hear it said that there is no movement that has not its usefulness; and, indeed, the Theosophists, the Single Taxers, the Eugenists and the Cubists, with all the hundred other manifestations of desire for better things in each of their fields, each and all have their degree of merit and worth. They are valuable for one thing particularly, and that is for showing a tendency of the age. It is a complex, disintegrating tendency, for each one drives (or carries, if one feels favorably inclined) in a different direction.

There is something, however, that is common to all of them, and that is that they seek the basic fact of existence, the fundamental remedy of error as they see it. The typical Socialist is obsessed with the idea of employing

economic power; the Christian Scientist is equally obsessed with the use of spiritual power; the Physical Culturist is dominated by the desire to create physical prowess; the Futurist is determined to discard the conventions of the past; while the thorough-going Anarchist would let everybody do just about as he pleases. One might be a follower of almost all the movements, and then one would be a fundamentalist with a vengeance.

That would be the most admirable and desirable type of human being were it not for the fact that there are elements in existence of the greatest import that are not within the scope of any labelled movement. There is a certain calm thoughtfulness and generally progressive tendency common to all genuine and intelligent people that is neither dominated nor dominating. It simply persists aside and in spite of the violent outbursts of propagandists. Contemplation is one of its considerable elements and tolerance is one of its chief effects. The lackeys of new creeds look upon it as a superficiality. Its possessors are not spouting such a volume of water as the more radical whales and so they seem to be sailing in shal-

low seas. Really, it is never lack of courage that keeps them on the surface: it requires sublime courage not to be an intellectual diver to-day—the epithets of the seekers of the bottom are so violent.

What strikes one most forcibly about the habitués of causes is their intellectual ugliness. Generally rasping, their thinking on all subjects is crude and perverted. They possess power, but it is the power of a very lumbering elephant who can not manage itself when it gets into steep places. If the road is blocked with petty opposition it can knock its objectors over and proceed; but on a free yet rocky path it rolls about from side to side and may even turn a few somersaults on the way.

The man whom the propagandists deem superficial is saved from these mildly ungraceful proceedings. He is commonly supposed to do little more than save himself in this fashion. In reality he goes down the ages as the tribunal before whom all causes and all movements and all propaganda are tried. His is the judgment that will not perish. In art he furnishes taste to posterity. In science he supplies the undiscredited facts of the future. He is the

backbone of the generations; and while difficult to characterize, he is thoroughly recognizable, and decade after decade he goes on being born, growing in thoughtfulness and tolerance and reserve force, and coming to act as the great creative modifier of opposed violences. He represents the most attractive type and the most important, and through him man's lasting and permanent progress must come.

LITTLE ARNOLD BENNETT

Mr. Bennett is always positive and sometimes right. And this occasional truthfulness is one of his chief evils, for it bolsters his assurance and makes his positiveness unshrinking. He has become an absolutist *par excellence*, and his contradictions are as firm as his original assertions. For example, in *How to Live on Twenty-four Hours a Day*, he assures us that "there is no such man as the average man" and that "every man and every man's case is special." Yet on the page beyond he talks of "his" typical man and to the average he addresses himself constantly. The assumption of mediocrity on the part of all men is the first essential to belief in his preaching. In a particularly unpregnant epigram we are exhorted to attempt a petty success because "nothing fails like failure." Yet who but the "average" man regards a small accomplishment as worthier than a mighty aspiration?

And this is the book of which we learn that "scarcely any of the comment has been adverse," excepting some objections to its frivolity! Why, in the name of reason and original-

ity, has no one objected to its seriousness—the seriousness with which are uttered the platitudes of the ages, uttered with apologies, it is true, but none the less passionately? Here is a man in the twentieth century insensible to the fact that positive assertions become untrue the moment they are made, that the absolute is unapproachable and that middle-class finalities feed nothing today but our ruinous optimism.

Of the great gravities of life he is unaware. He is all for the day to day efficiency. He urges men to read imaginative poetry in the same spirit (and paragraph) as he recommends Epictetus. Not a word is there of creative ardor, not a suggestion of those soul-stirring currents that carry men to supreme accomplishment. Half an hour of “concentration,” ninety minutes every other day of “serious reading”—these are his offerings to spirits speeding toward eternity. We are human machines capable of forming literary taste and mastering mental efficiency. There is the Alpha and Omega of the Bennet doctrine. But some of us are without the taste or the efficiency, and these, for some reason, he finds

more interesting to write about; so we have novels and plays of folk not possessed of his "pocket philosophies."

Imagine if they were! Conceive *The Old Wives' Tale* told of people who were following the concentration exhortation! Fewer contemporaries would be readers. Yet throughout this best of his books and down from it to his silliest play, we find the same calm insistence on monotony. It is all just one thing after another—as someone described life itself, forgetting the splashes of orange that are thrust in everywhere on the gray-greens and dull-blues of existence. From the pinnacle of our last hour, life may look like an undulating plain, but we experience it as filled with dark caverns and dangerous seas and vast, unassailable mountains.

And so Arnold Bennett's books are not true for us. We do not learn from their calm acceptance of the bourgeois virtues. Their sincerity is obvious, but that does not make them true. Yet they come from a man of undoubted insight and imagination—insight into all but the deep, blinding forces of life, imagination of all but the sweeping passion and the surging

hates and fears and loves of men.

The novels are books without shadows—and therefore without highlights. When anyone dies there is scarcely a ripple of discomfort among the living. And thus it is in many of our lives: we lose father and mother and sister and brother and countless friends, and we surmount every loss because we are left dazed. But most of us are almost always dazed. We do not know why we are here, where we are going, or what will happen to us tomorrow, and we have quite forgotten the day before yesterday. It is only in the rarely vivid moments of the usual person that he remembers the past, or senses the present keenly, or imagines or foresees the future. Yet these moments have been the substance of art since writing began, and some great artists have pictured them immortally, even when they were happening to every day men and women. So it is not very fairly descriptive to announce Mr. Bennett as a remarkable realist, because he skims over the years instead of dwelling on the quarter hours. The years whirl by in a dream; the minutes are vivid as a lightning flash. Both are real enough indeed; they are

opposite methods of looking at the same matter. In a measure, they represent different ways of accepting experience: the one, the silent soporific method of the mid-Victorian old-maid; the other, the deep-seated, vigorous, fearless method of the creator of all times. From a point of God-like aloofness, neither may be the greater, but art has always concerned itself with the latter, and to the petulant spirits of this age, the latter must be vastly more interesting.

We may not be precisely petulant today. That pictures us of this generation as distinctly disagreeable inheritors of this generously amusing planet. But we are deeply stirred, we are turbulent, the thoughtful, the sensitive among us. Life appears to us at many points as a greatly wasted treasure, and we hope for extensive readjustments that may bring us down to a better basis so that all may have more of the fundamental values. We are uneasy among the fumbblings and futilities of our leaders, and most of us are avid for suggestions from that salt of the earth, the writers whom men acclaim great.

Therefore it is, that when a man so hailed as

Arnold Bennett appears so puerilely uncognizant of the trembling forces of his time, the judicious grieve.

It is not essential that one should be a promulgator of programs like Wells or Shaw; that is admittedly not the primary function of the novelist. There are greater men who have to offer no solutions, men like Galsworthy and Hardy and gentle tingling Meredith. These are fervent with subtlety and tremulous with suggestion, and that robs them of appeal to a number of thousands. No doubt the man of everyday detests no single factor quite so much as this suggestiveness, accompanied by anything that is subtle. He certainly eschews it conversationally and in plays it dances past his ears. It seems untruthful to him, insincere. He must have his laugh and his cry labelled for him—and his lecture, too, which might sensibly be marked "Poison—do not touch." When Shaw misleads him he becomes provoked; when Galsworthy sets him down in doubt, he is horrified. But with his good brother Bennett he can feel at home: when it's a novel he buys he can be positive that he will have simple story from beginning to end; when

it's a tract, he can settle down, with a smack of the lips, to a solid, self-respect-creating task, at the end of which he can feel quite sure that he possesses all he needs to know about the subject.

Mr. Bennett knows how to do these things, for he can write. He knows how to group words and to fetch down rapping sentences. He can throw the simple-hearted reader into glorious gusts of easily-explainable laughter, he can produce the tremor, the sigh, the expectant hush, the scurrying ardor to be at the end. That is because he has a great and mighty skill. But he cannot inspire the thoughtful and he cannot enchain the reflective and he cannot lead one to vast heights of emotion. That is because he has not a great and mighty soul.

The remaining criticisms follow directly from this situation. Mr. Bennett's skillfulness succeeds in massing small detail and still preserving an atmosphere throughout the recital. His soullessness succeeds in making that recital a remarkably flat and uninspiring affair. Even so well executed a piece of humor as *Buried Alive* is more refreshing ten pages from the

beginning than as many lines from the end. We are easily sated with monotony, even when it is monotony at an unusually high pitch. And we cannot feed our minds forever on the bloodless characters of an unimpassioned brain. They are actual enough, assuredly, these whimsical folk of the Bennett books, except for their lack of the sweeping moments that make a commonplace existence endurable, and that arise when passion or ambition or hatred or some other feeling overwhelms the petty man. The Bennett business folk are so unbelievably petty that they are never overwhelmed—or must one say so normal, since a book that describes the ecstasies of life is inevitably erotic or neurotic or something or other that the royalty-paying readers do not like? No, for good substantial returns trust to the clammy desexualized character. If you restrain yourself in this regard you may describe the smallest function of your individuals with the most complete waste of time or space or writing materials, and a waiting public will read. But the thoroughly human is thought degenerate in England and America and books that deal with it have a sudden sale that dies almost at once. So

if you are an efficient business man of literature, you avoid such disasters by being as true as you can in an adjoining field, out of harm's way.

ART AND AFFECTATION

All people are endowed by nature with certain methods and mannerisms of speech and movement. The conscious alteration of these attributes is called affectation. The term is used, however, in general as one of reproach and so when the onlooker approves of the particular method of distorting the observed one's "natural" characteristics, the latter is not said to be affected. Thus, for example, if a man "naturally" had a tendency to suck his thumb continually in public or to scratch the sole of his left foot, or to kick one of his heels high in the air whenever he was pleased, and if this same picturesque individual managed to rid himself of these habits, the average observer would not call such a good riddance an affectation. If, however, a man has a harsh, unpleasant voice and he manages to turn it into a modulated tuneful one, or if he finds the movements of the average male ungraceful and he manages to make his own more effective, he is immediately liable to be termed an affected person. This generally happens because the other folk in his particular community are un-

used to the kind of voice in which he speaks or to the type of movements which he has trained his body to perform.

It is perfectly obvious that all forms of affectation are the product of an exercise of will power and their growth must therefore be co-ordinate with the growth of self control. An uncontrolled person cannot be an affected one. Moreover, affectation requires the observation of one's own mannerisms and the comparison of one's own with other people's, together with a wholesome self-disparagement as one of the results of the comparison. If this were not so the person would never be affected, for, failing to observe the superiority of any other form of discourse or motion, it would never occur to him to approximate his own to any observed form. We have, then, in affectation also an exhibition of keen desire for self-improvement.

With the practice of affectation bolstered by this tremendous galaxy of excellent qualities essentially connected with it, it seems scarcely necessary to utter any further defense, but when we examine the process a little further we find that it is very closely bound up

with that most valuable asset of human existence, the genuine expression of personality.

Examine the authors who are supposed to be affected: men like Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, Gilbert K. Chesterton and George Meredith. They are invariably the writers with a distinctly personal style. They are in each case the men whose work accurately and profoundly reflects their own individuality and whose expression and ideas are in complete accord. The "natural" writers are practically without style and nothing but their supreme genius has been able to succeed in spite of this very serious defect—in fact, we never hear of a natural writer unless he happens to be a great genius such as Tolstoy, Shakespeare, Goethe and Homer. The smaller men fall by the wayside unless they turn the expression of their thoughts into an individual form, and to the extent that they do this they are supposed to be affected. The same thing is true in graphic art: Turner, Whistler and Beardsley being affected, and Rembrandt, Hals, and Michael Angelo being supreme enough to have succeeded without a deeply self-expressive style.

Your typical fat-head is no contemned crea-

ture of affectation. He is far too lazily self-satisfied to tax himself with any alteration in his natural qualities. Likewise your gratified matron, who, having captured her legitimate prey, settles down to a living of scandal-mongering, rich food and bridge whist—she is not concerned with the addition to her personality, of the graces and kindlinesses of life. Who, indeed, are your affected poseurs, but the most talented, the most cultured, sophisticated, thoughtful, brilliant and suggestive members of your acquaintance?

It requires considerable will power to act out an affectation to its inevitable conclusion of becoming an authentic piece of self-expression. Persuade a weakling to attempt this and he will generally fail, but his will power will improve under the effort. Induce a thief to affect honesty and he will end up as virtuous as you please. "Become what thou art" is an ideal; "become what you affect," a reality.

One of the iconoclastic onslaughts of this generation must be directed against the prejudice of the unthinking regarding the valuable and very social art of affectation. Without this we should have no conscious advances in per-

sonality, no growth of self-control. We must not condemn even a poor exhibition, or not any more strongly than we do an inferior work in painting or literature. In such cases our function as appreciative critics is to demand improvement. We are all in a state of "becoming" and only he who stagnates can be completely consistent or supremely sincere.

THE SHADOWY MR. YEATS

Slow and sure seems the forte—or may one say the *piano*?—of Mr. Yeats. On the instrument of his talent the sonatas he plays are soft and melodious. Compared to the poetic symphonies of Masfield, the work of Mr. Yeats is that of a veritable MacDowell. And this is high praise; for MacDowell, despite his cruel suppression by the brutal president of Columbia, composed with surety and success—that is, with beauty.

That Mr. Yeats' poems have something near to beauty in them is almost the first thing one feels the need to say of them; that this presence is not always that of beauty itself, is the second. So often it is merely the atmosphere of beauty, the hypnotic influence of the expectation of beauty; for always we are lead by Mr. Yeats to expect, continually and everlastingly, beauty of the first order. In a way, his claim to beauty is like the claim to seriousness of a writer of ponderous prose, resounding with profound phrases, some book of pseudo-science by a man who knows not how to be simple: the matter of the book may be the merest bun-

combe but it persuades us of its seriousness by its size and ponderosity. So Mr. Yeats seems always to be telling us, as we turn his pages, "This poem or this play is going to be beautiful, very, very beautiful," and certainly the atmosphere of the thing invariably calls up beauty; but, examining the lines, we find that those actually of rare and wondrous quality are few.

Perhaps this is because the work is comatose. It is, at least, unstimulating in a high degree. There is something soporific about it, and although we may admit that bed is a beatific place, we do not desire our poets to drive us there. Nor is this sleepiness to be explained by reference to Mr. Yeats' obvious mysticism. Many a mystic besides Jesus has been a stirrer up of the spirit. It is, perhaps, because the slow-moving calm of religiosity is what his mind requires. He happens to be a Protestant but he has the soul of a Catholic, as Chesterton, who happens to acclaim the Catholic belief, is temperamentally a typical Protestant.

Mr. Yeats' mysticism is unalive. He writes of life as if it were death, and of death also—wherefore these latter descriptions are

strangely adequate and ghastly. But man does not live by death alone, nor, indeed, at all, and we cannot dwell indefinitely in a world of ghosts without disturbing our digestions. Mr. Wells may tell us all he pleases that stomachic difficulties are essential to good writing; we are not all writers (thank the Lord!) and surely some part of Mr. Yeats' readers still hope for something from him besides death-smitten heroes possessed of strange, uncarnal appetites, maids married to the grave before their birth on the scene, old hags stepping into it, and wandering children adream on eternity.

Once in my presence, and Mr. Yeats', a ministerial gentleman expressed this hope in supple, rounded oratory and was verbally trounced for it afterwards in Mr. Yeats' most delicate and biting manner. He admired the Yeats poetry exceedingly but he wished to see its appeal widened, and he proceeded to call the poet "onward and upward" to "greater tasks and grander glories," if I recollect his phrasing. Mr. Yeats declined with thanks, and quite rightly. The things of death, the pale purple

things, are the ones that he is able to do, exceedingly brilliantly able, and he is adequate to nothing else. It is not so very important why this is the case. It may be due to his Irishness, to his deep relation with the saddest people on the globe, who are credited, ridiculously, with being a nation of humorists, because they possess Shaw and Moore, the most serious man and the simplest of our time. It may be because he has led a life of poetic solitude, as the poets of old are supposed to have done, instead of bowing to the bowl or rah-whooing with the mob. It may be because of a hundred experiences, associations and ties, or lack of them: but aloof from life he is and is destined to remain; and his public must take him with that understanding.

That they do take him—a certain public—is very evident. That this public is not so large as that of more human poets, is probable. But shall we not come to realize some time that the size of a poet's public, in the present state of the world, is influential mainly on his royalties, and on very little else? Of poets, as of prophets, it may be said that the despised of our time become the darlings of our children's.

And Mr. Kipling, the peerless clanger of Britania, may be thought cheap and insignificant—except as a story writer—within fifty years!

It is slight condemnation to declare Mr. Yeats a man without a message. His poems are messageless, and in his prose he writes big vaguenesses on little concrete things, as naturally as some philosophic spirits of this age are writing tiny thoughts upon the greatest questions in the world. But Mr. Yeats' mind remains at large whether it deals with the Celtic Twilight or the Celtic theatre or the twilight of the theatre—now that Synge is dead and Yeats is over forty! His is a mind that roams the empyrean no matter what it starts for, sprinkling its path with star-dust as it goes, but never reaching any of the weightier planets.

Why, indeed, should it be otherwise? He can never conquer the cohorts of the propagandists Shaw, Wells and the rest, though he may have a part of the following of the idealistically elusive Galsworthy. At least he has the pleasure of knowing that many of the thousands who read him understand and enjoy; and how many more of the readers of H. G.

Wells and G. B. S. enter deeply into their ideas, and feel and think and seriously analyse? The true public of every man is a petty thing today—though his readers number in the millions. We are not meaningful to the many. Demos remains undaunted, though the first-rate of every generation give their lives up trying to stifle his stupidity. Shaw laughs his truth out, smeared with his heart's blood, and the multitude laughs, too, because it is all so funny. Yeats sadly smiles his ecstasy upon the world and a few quiver while the many yawn.

George Moore attempted to do poems like Mr. Yeats and failed, because he was too clever and too—mundane. And so did Lady Gregory with the one-act play. These failed in beauty, or rather the elusive atmosphere suggesting beauty, that is Mr. Yeats' chief performance. Lady Gregory tells all of a thing, and therefore nothing; Mr. Yeats, saying nought openly or completely, unbares a world to those who carry one in their heads. The great ones have done more than this: they have made a world out of their own minds and left it to us to play with for a thousand years: our Shakespeare and Milton and Balzac and Hugo and Goethe;

this they have done. Mr. Yeats is leaving us a land of shadows, visible to those who can see in the quickening twilight, a land of sweet, suggestive figures, and that is all that Mr. Yeats must do.

GEORGE MOORE THE MUNDANE

A new book from Mr. Moore, and this time—the first, in many years—a book of criticism, as well as a novel, convinces us more firmly than ever that, although a rolling stone gathers no moss it often achieves a most attractive polish. A gossipy subtleness, a refinement of the commonplace is reached in “Hail and Farewell” that is quite beyond anything that even the author of “Memoirs of My Dead Life” has done.

Once more, as in the work that preceded this, Mr. Moore exhibits himself as the British exemplar of the French realist-esthetes, and once more, like several of them, he is guilty of an ethical affirmation. He has declared for freedom of sex discussion and liberty of sex relation. This is his one departure from estheticism. This is his one contribution to the attitude of his time.

Mr. Moore’s psychology is simple. Devoid of passion, he makes sex the key-note of his thought and life. Lovers speak not—they have better modes of expression. Only a man of weak desires is qualified to voice the call of

the body. Admirers of Mr. Moore, visiting Dublin—into which poor, cool city, haunted by both Catholic and Protestant restraint, he has retired from the ravages of London and Paris—are astonished to see his gaunt figure, topped by its unattractive visage and its thin pale hair. They wonder if this is the Lover of Orelay and the confessor of England's most artistic search for lust. Where, then—they ask—are the writhing red lips and the fire-flashing eyes and the huge, muscular frame of perfect proportions? They have never existed for Mr. Moore, any more than for such earlier attendants at the literary confessional as Rousseau, Flaubert or Marie Bashkirtseff. Genuine passion does not write about itself. It is only the mild but ever present appetite that goads to self-expression.

Mr. Moore is a true apostle of sex. His religion, music and the rest are merely contributing backgrounds. As far as the expression of ideas is concerned, sex is his one strength, his one originality, his one sincerity. The usual artist has a thousand intellectual angles from which emanate as many momentary

sincerities. Every affirmation is a denial of something he has believed or something he is later going to believe. A single truth that will cover all things at all times (such as the philosopher seeks and the religious possesses) is impossible of retention by the artistic mind. Only the simple can be sincere. And with these Mr. Moore ought always to have been placed. Despite Mr. Huneker, he has changed but little. Sex has been and is his pursuit, his luxury, his stock in trade. His treatment of the topic has the emphasis of the merchant who has wares to sell. But all this is the logical result of the self-realization which has been the purpose and indulgence of his life.

With this exception, George Moore is as barren of ideas as Kipling or Pinero. Only rarely do ripples come to the surface of his muddy pools of thought. For him, sex is the determining factor not only—as for novelists generally—at the supreme crises of life, but at every moment and in every mood. Passion, however, is not his. In Mr. Moore, the conscious intellect—such as it is—moves in a circle. His mind is the student of his senses and his senses are the motive power of his mind.

Now it is, ridiculously, for his one unimpeachable contribution to contemporary thought that Mr. Moore has been most universally condemned: his firm and fearless stand for the only freedom that he values. And surely if there is one condition in the world to-day upon the rectification of which the progress of mankind inevitably and essentially depends, it is the vast and definite inequality between man and woman, with all the palpable insincerities and inconsistencies which this entails.

Mr. Moore has observed this in the same way that he has noted many elements of modern life. He has not thought about them. He has been too busy getting them to paper. So gathering a host of facts he has attained to only partial truth. Perhaps he has seen, but he has not solved. He has told, not taught. The pages in his books depicting the attractiveness and, as it were, the morality of vice, are products of neither aspiring art nor salutary science.

In a contentious "Apologia" published in the American edition of "Memoirs of My Dead

Life," Mr. Moore defends all that he has written on the subject of sex. The argument is twofold: first, that the public is inconsistent and inefficient when it tries to deal with morals, since it determines its position without reason, and learns nothing from experience; and secondly, that such books as his own, however one may disapprove of them, do not incite to imitation in life at all—certainly far less than the tales of Boccaccio, the poems of Byron, or the plays of Shakespeare.

This contention is curiously unreasonable, for it is certainly untrue that Boccaccio's fanciful episodes of fourteenth century Florentine nobility, taking place under conditions never present in contemporary life, or Byron's satiric poetry, or Shakespeare's scenes, sensual in expression, but rarely without spiritual uplift—it is surely untrue that these are influential over readers' lives. Far more so are the realistic reproductions of George Moore, done with the delicacy of semi-sincerity, unhampered by any intensity of feeling. Mr. Moore has learned that to fascinate readers, one must not be forceful.

Yet in spite of his evident influence on the attitude of his public, Mr. Moore is unlikely to tear the world from its Christian virtues, for he is insufficiently positive of his own morality. He flounders irrecoverably in the "Apologia." Of his two logical defenses he employs neither. His contention should naturally and obviously be either that he has created works of art founded on human life as he experienced it, truthful, but altogether free of any propagandist intent; or he should argue (and such a course is eminently possible) for the universal adoption of the moral attitude suggested in his stories, on the ground that this represents a distinct improvement on that at present held by a majority of the race. It is certainly more free, more fearless and more frank than the American cogglomeration of blank, bungling Comstockery and openly gross physical over-indulgence. Instead of hitching his chariot to such a planet, and making his course plain as the sunlight, Mr. Moore flies away in a cloud of chatter about the impossibility of having one moral code for all people or for all moments; and then, at the suggestion

of a quoted correspondent, makes the sudden discovery that he has been distinctively and powerfully propagandist without knowing it. Such action illustrates a degree of unconscious uncertainty which is not appropriate even in the supposed creative artist. Uncertainty may develop the imagination; but one should always be conscious—especially of the things of which one is not sure.

George Moore is simply a gunshot at the conventions of this century. Quite well he sees that soul is no longer possible in our society; that here is the greatest moral deadness in the world; that neither successful nor unsuccessful, rich nor poor, learned nor ignorant, are immune from its devitalizing effects. Only those in revolt can remain spiritually pure. The creature of convention may lead a blameless life, but he does so by chance or necessity or habit, not by seeking the attainment of his own truth. He lives not by a creed of his making but by one he has stolen from the multitude.

Beyond these realizations Mr. Moore does not go. Of the particular he has much to say:

of our whole society, absolutely nothing. Yet his revolt continues, perhaps, as Mr. Chesterton avers, because he has something of the Irishman in him still. Bernard Shaw's suggestion in the appendix to *Man and Superman*, of a free society in which parenthood should be subsidized by the state, and children nurtured as the saviors of the world is an example of radical yet thoroughly constructive criticism on this subject. In not one of his sex treatments, has Mr. Moore made such a constructive analysis. He is interested in intellectual developments, as in emotional, only to estheticize them. Naturally he does not care that thoughtful contemporaries see in the approach of the sexes to-day a solution of the problem. A new universality of spirit and appreciation seems to be the keynote of that 20th century development, the manly woman—she who possesses the historical manly qualities of courage, firmness, accomplishment and the rest. The highest types of manhood have never heretofore been matched in the other sex, largely because woman's appreciation—and therefore her ability—have been more limited. Nothing common to mankind must be lacking in

the leader of men, or in the interpreter of people; each must be largely a woman, just as each must be much of the student, the hermit, the soldier, the policeman, artist, thief. Being something of all these, he is in no wise dependent upon experiencing the situations of any of them. Universality appears, then, as an inherent characteristic, developed by all experience, yet subject to no particular experience. It is close to the sympathy of the mother, and to the imagination of the poet. "All great men," said Thoreau, "are essentially feminine."

The reverse might be said of the opposite sex.

To-day the old martial conception of manliness, tho altered by the commercialism of a hundred years, still holds its place. Yet, in the truest, highest sense of the term, the womanly man, having become mentally unsexed, having lost the prejudices and limitations of super-sex-consciousness, attains most nearly to the universal. Indeed, the typical manly man of the day is generally without the greater manly virtues, while our most talked-of American, Colonel Roosevelt, is found to

possess in large measure the essentially feminine characteristics of intuition, certainty and simplicity. That positively feminine qualities were present in Plato, Caesar, Shakespeare, Goethe, Napoleon and Whitman has long been recognized.

Now woman is soaring toward the universal by seeking manliness. Man has approached the goal more rapidly and prevents her success by chaining her to the particular. But in woman's present achievement rest many hopes. Ridicule cannot turn her aside; stigma is ceasing to attach to her, though it is still as easy to stigmatize to-day as it was to crucify two thousand years ago. Those who are championing the cause of the sex at the expense of self are scoffed at just as those of long ago were slain who fought men for the sake of man. "It is so easy to scoff." And then those who follow, sorrow for the ignorance of their forbears. We never fail to honor rapt enthusiasts—of other ages.

The valid objection to looking to the approach of the sexes for the solution of the tremendous sex difficulty of society lies in the

fact that this difficulty depends upon, is bound and covered by, the general economic condition of mankind to-day. It is economic inequality which constitutes the chief difference between the ragged, night-wandering employee of the sweat-shop and the diamond-decked daughter of her employer. The gradually solidifying separation of rich from poor is therefore the all-important problem of this generation, and so on some revision of the economic policy of the past seems to depend the adjustment of sex—as of almost everything else.

To the constructive writing on this subject Mr. Moore, of course, adds nothing. He is no more constructive than inspired. The creative portions of his latest book are descriptive rather than philosophical; its criticism is discursive, not creative. There is much about Mr. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and the Irish Movement; about travels on the Continent; and it is replete with the usual *affaires*. But all of this is really only a matter of clever talk. Mr. Moore has not, in short, the vision of the prophet, the artistry of the poet, or the depth of the philosopher. Upon the unawakened battle-

field of sex, amid the almost universal silence, he blows a trumpet blast of truth. It is to be hoped some others may begin to think where he has merely shouted.

Again and again we hear Mr. Moore termed a "realist," but in him we find a realism quite different from that to which we have been accustomed. We have known the realism of Zola and Brieux, which may be termed "scientific." This possesses a distinct intellectual and practical value. It aims fearless and forceful blows at prejudice and convention. It condemns the practice of secrecy concerning recognized evils. It widens the knowledge of the public on topics of "unmentionable" but supremely important character. We have seen the realism of Wells and Galsworthy, which aims not only at special cures, but also carries with it an unmistakeable suggestion of general solution which might prompt the use of "spiritual" in its characterization. Without one or the other element no work of realistic art can be very much more than an *art object*. This is what Mr. Moore's creations really are. Their realism, being neither scientific nor spir-

itual, is what, for want of a better name, we must call "esthêtic." They aim at a candid reproduction of the picturesque.

In *Modern Painting*, Mr. Moore's most popular critical work, he pleads guilty to the grave offense of having "suggested that a work of art . . . may influence a man's moral conduct." He then, as in the American preface already mentioned, proceeds upon a forceful denial of this thesis. Such denials constitute one of Mr. Moore's chief critical contentions. They are his only defense of his frank treatment of the sex question. Yet, of course, books do influence life—often more than life itself. Reading "The Lovers of Orelay" may have perturbed the charity secretary, whom Mr. Moore quotes, more than meeting with just such an experience in life would have done. Even personally knowing Doris could not have affected this pious man so strongly. Her attraction would probably have been merely an object of philosophical consideration.

Mr. Moore is said to have at moments somewhat the same directness and virility of attack that have spread the fame of Shaw, but in

“Ave”—which deals with some matter also treated by the latter—the onslaughts are only comparable with those of G. B. S. as the execution of a sheet of sandpaper is comparable with that of a plane; Mr. Shaw shaves his chunk off with the hardest and surest of intellectual metal; Mr. Moore covers the surface more smoothly, but he is wavering and rasping. Only on sex is he sympathetically attuned, only on sex is he temperamentally effective and sincere.

In the last analysis it makes little difference whether a writer elects to be sincere or make a living. He cannot really put to paper more or less than his own soul. It is by losing his soul, or giving it, that the author achieves himself ultimately. And this out-pouring of his greatest possession is his one essential ability. Indeed, of what avail is it to him if he gain the whole world, and cannot lose his own soul?

Mr. Moore has succeeded in serving us his soul, but our appetite remains unsatisfied. It is pleasing food, but slight, sterile, insignificant. It is a soul that becomes finally neither

startling nor shocking. It merely succeeds in telling us the expected in a whisper and shouting the subtle into our ear drums. That is what happens in "Hail and Farewell," as in every one of his score of other books.

From another angle the author may remind us of the chariot-race stage horses, madly dashing onward without ever arriving anywhere. Vigor and combativeness we are given in plenty, but when the time comes for the curtain here they are, horses, chariot, and driver, just where they were at the beginning—or a week before that. The rehearsals have been carried to perfection; the scenery flits by, changing momentarily; but the struggle is stagecraft, even if horses and men are actual. We realize that if we return the following day we shall see precisely the same performance. The scene shifts, but the spirit persists.

It is in a spirit cooled by artistry and unwarmed by inspiration, that Mr. Moore has done his last and longest work. In a sense, it is nevertheless, adequate, for it is rounded and complete. Serious flaws in taste or construction, such as those of which Shakespeare and

Dickens have been guilty, are not for Mr. Moore. Bordering on the unblemished, he is close to insipidity. For some as yet undiscovered reason, adequacy is seldom inspired, and perfection never sublime. Those who have tortured us with the divine pangs of terrific beauty are often those who, at moments, stir in us a sense of incongruity and sometimes even of disgust. Such is the feeling caused by all the coarser scenes in Shakespeare's sweetest comedies following close upon episodes fragrant with old-world fancies, or fraught with the shattering glory of immortal lines. No one in England can touch the estheticism of sex with so delicate and yet unswerving a hand as Mr. Moore. Yet are there any who find in his work the towering temperament, the dominating desire or the inexplicable breath-catching beauty of the master craftsman?

He has, indeed, led a vivid existence. He has gone ahead, unconquered, undismayed, writing wretched poetry, poor essays, passable novels, puerile plays and now he starts to gossip his way faultlessly into oblivion. He has

lived, a varietist, in art as in sex; and in a certain sense, variety is the price of life. But where in all his sure and subtle art, where is the whirl of summitless spirit? Where are the words shall tremble on the lips of time?

THE FETICH OF SINCERITY

Most sincerity is the supreme form of selfishness. It is self culture at the expense of that kindly consideration for others, which is certainly a first principle of civilized beings, and to which occasional lying is essential. The virtue of truth is greatly like that of chastity; either of them, carried to excess, becomes a vice.

The only person to whom one should be excessively truthful is one's self, and one never accomplishes that because one's self is always the easiest to fool. If Polonius had been really wise he might have advised his son, To thine own self be true—and thou canst then be false to any man with impunity.

We all lie, but we become weakened and debauched in proportion to the extent of our unconscious lying. And the punishment of most liars is not, as G. B. S. avers, that they cannot believe anyone else, but that they come, frequently, to believe themselves. Then they cease being creative artists and must be relegated to the region of the vicious. For lying,

itself, is assuredly, as Oscar Wilde proclaimed, an art, and creative in the highest sense. Only God can control facts, but man becomes God-like in his control of the recital of them. He is free in every case to assert the affirmative or the negative—and how little of such freedom we have on this earth!

But we must be brave and hearty in our lying, for this, like other virtues, becomes petty when it is practiced by cowards. Just so a woman must be chaste with an “air” if she is to be respected by the discerning and she may be unchaste like a coward and still be quite ridiculously respectable.

Either truth or lying must be justified by the circumstances. Both cannot be right for the same case, and we must develop a keen discrimination that will tell us which is best on each occasion.

And insincerity has still another magnificent reason for being, because although it is a fact that very few of us can tell ourselves the truth, we are all madly anxious to obtain the truth from others. This leads us to demand confidences to which we are not entitled, and causes us to exact information of no value to

us that we secure for the simple satisfaction of our curiosity . We crave to find out about our friends and their friends and even the people we do not know, and all their actions and thoughts, collectively or individually; in fact, most of us are immensely curious about nearly everything.

Now this curiosity is an excellent attribute, from the subjective standpoint; it assures us that we are mentally alive. But from the standpoint of others it is just as certainly a very dangerous and disagreeable matter. So we are forced to get at all the truth we can, while giving out only so much as we please; and there is no way except by being frequently untruthful that we can win at the game.

All these conditions are extremely obvious. We should every one of us be admitting them every day, were it not that sincerity has become one of the most imposing fetiches of the time. It is like the fixed belief that a married woman must be incapable of seriously liking any man but her husband, which persists in spite of the fact that all but the most naive of us know that not one in a hundred is mentally faithful throughout a lifetime. And how

disgustingly unimaginative we should become if we were never illicitly attracted, and if we remained continuously sincere! Stupidity would reign supreme and brilliance be no more.

And if, indeed, despite all arguments, we did determine to be unequivocally truthful, we should immediately find that we had decided upon a course impossible of fulfillment. Not only are there a thousand nuances every day, in every mind worthy the name, that cannot be couched in words, but there are completely developed thoughts that thrust themselves upon one in the midst of talk, the expression of which is rendered inappropriate and misleading by the context of the conversation. There are modifying ideas that come forward while one is phrasing a thought that would occupy countless hours if all of them were handled adequately. The moment we say a thing we begin to alter our viewpoint toward it, and our speech is quite incapable of keeping up with these alterations.

So there can be no complete sincerity, however we may wish for it, even between two of the most intensely intimate companions.

Some thoughts are carelessly tossed aside, others are consciously suppressed, still others come forth into words deformed and scarcely to be recognized. And perhaps it is just as well that this is so, for few as there are who can bear the truth from their own minds, still fewer are there who could survive if truth were always thrust upon them by their neighbors. Therefore, all hail to the kindly insincerities consciously chosen by self-reliant spirits for the welfare of their weaker brothers!

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON: DEFENDER OF THE DISCARDED

It is never too late to mend, but it is very often far too late to break—especially when one is dealing with the reputation of a supremely successful journalist. This is more or less as it should be, for the fact that a man's work succeeds is not always a reliable evidence of its failure. But neither does it follow that because one has succeeded he has met with genuine success, and no successful man has failed more lamentably at certain points than Mr. G. K. Chesterton.

Yet in spite of his failures (and of his success) many things can be said in his favor. His critical works have been justly and, on the whole, adequately praised as masterpieces of suggestive writing, seductive in style and replete with varied and spectacular allusions. That they are only at moments constructive (in the sense of flashing before us living characters) is more than compensated for by their splendor of insinuation. Chesterton was as certain to fail in presenting a complete and inevitable Shaw as was Shaw himself in ex-

hibiting a true and virile Ibsen. For just as only a very superficial man can be thoroughly conscious of his own depths, so only a man of tremendous depths is able to realize another's superficialities. Chesterton writes about Shaw as if every mood and motion in his work could be resolved upon the deepest concepts of the latter's philosophy; and Shaw would have us seriously believe that Ibsen possessed some fundamental faith to which he always bore allegiance. Every great creator is the creature of his fancy and any criticism that attempts to make genius perfectly consistent must fail to achieve its aim. Chesterton's own greatest shortcomings might be said to be results of his almost absolute consistency.

Not that his point of view has been always the same. In *The Wild Knight*, his early and only book of poems, is found a standpoint utterly dissimilar, to that of anything since except, perhaps, *The Defendant*, his first volume of essays, which may be regarded as the production of a transition period. With the publication of *Heretics* his ideas begin to crystallize, and here is illustrated one of his saddest

and most signal failures. For as he becomes surer of himself, as the crystalline clearness is achieved, the hardness and just a touch of the coldness of crystal are noticeable. The Defendant is the best of his treatises; the Dickens, of his biographies; and The Napoleon of Notting Hill of his novels. His more recent writings are all, in the attributes which have won him distinction, inferior.

Application of Mr. Chesterton's analysis of the Irishman, who, he believes, "could see with one eye that a dream was inspiring, bewitching, or sublime, and with the other eye that after all it was only a dream," might readily be made to himself. It is because Chesterton never utterly loses himself, because his consciousness is always perfect, because his dream never for an instant seems to become his reality, that he can never meet with wide and vital acceptance. His "mind distinguishes between life and literature," and as a consequence his literature is without influence over others' lives. Mankind is swayed and steadied by the great half-thinkers whose hearts are larger than their heads. Perhaps the greatest of all Mr. Chesterton's faults is the domination of

his mind. Inspiration and self-consciousness are impossible bed-fellows.

But self-consciousness, far from being opposed, is surely essential to the gentle art of making epigrams. Chesterton tells us that Shaw's wit "is never a weakness; therefore it is never a sense of humor." This characteristic is the very essence of cleverness, that twentieth century development, mothered by Oscar Wilde, in which Chesterton himself abounds. Cleverness is always fundamentally serious; it has always a conscious end. Cleverness is not the external exhibition of a mood; it is intellectually created to produce a mood. This is what serves to differentiate it finally from either wit or humor.

Both of these latter may be, indeed generally are, a matter of natural instinct. Seldom can they be consciously developed. They burst full-blown, from a page of serious writing, or leap, triumphant and irresistible, into an unwelcoming discourse. Cleverness, on the other hand, is almost altogether a matter of development, of careful and tireless training, the product of watchful nurture. It depends for its very being upon absolute and unwavering

self-consciousness. To be clever one must always be intellectually on the spot. To drift into the realm of contemplation is fatal; to dream is to sign the death-warrant of clever writing or conversation. Cleverness, therefore, can never partake of either the depths of thought or the heights of inspiration. This is the quality of which Chesterton is the greatest protagonist, and one of the most effective employers, in the world. From this aspect, his work is important, but imperfect; we hear the clanging of his mental machinery on almost every page. Were the product perfect, there would be a running ripple of laughter from beginning to end.

Realizing cleverness to be a conscious accomplishment, we naturally tend to expect some ulterior motive for which it exists. As employed by Shaw it persuades an unusually large public to accept for consideration a very serious thinker who, without it, would be restricted to the attention of the few. In the work of this writer we find a complete and consistent point of view toward everything in the world, and out of it. It is of the first importance to determine whether any such stand-

point can be found in the work of Mr. Chesterton.

A review, read recently, makes the customary assumption and may serve as an illuminating example.

"Of course this is much more than a novel"; says the confident reviewer; "and while we are infinitely amused over the adventures of Mr. Chesterton's characters, at the same time we are aware that the author means to drive home some telling truths in regard to our ideals and practices."

This is exactly what critics are always saying about Mr. Chesterton. They invariably assure us of the depth of meaning underlying his frivolity. What this is, they make not the slightest pretence to tell us. By nature the solemn critic feels it incumbent upon him to apologize for cleverness by reference to some fundamental philosophy. In the case of Mr. Chesterton no commentator (with the exception of his anonymous biographer) has made even the slightest effort to investigate his concepts, and when we turn to the writings themselves we find that he has made his ideas far from evident.

One seemingly consistent point of view we do find in all his recent work. This, as has been said, was not in the least apparent in *The Wild Knight*, but it appears more or less in everything else up to *Heretics*, and very positively in everything since. This is the spirit of reaction, reaction against everything that is new or modern or "progressive"—he defines the word somewhere to include all those who believe in the possibility of mankind attaining genuine happiness through the spread of education and reform—but to nothing very definite or particular. He evinces, indeed, a leaning toward Catholicism, but his standpoint is scarcely that of a Catholic. "Back to religion," cries Chesterton, quite unaffectedly, and with great gusto, not for any especial reason, not because it is true, but because religion and humility are good for soul and body. Believe in God, because this will make you fat. Omit modernity from your intellectual diet and you will remain untroubled by mental indigestion. "If Christianity makes a man happy while his legs are being eaten by a lion," he speculates, "might it not make me happy while my legs are still attached to me and walking

down the street?" This is as close to Mr. Chesterton's spiritual standpoint as he has permitted us to come. In the same way, he has written many anti-liberal manifestoes, yet his patrio-bellum beliefs bear no direct relation to the creed of either the Socialist or the Tory.

Is he, then, what he is continually proclaiming himself, an original and constructive philosopher? In the preface to *Heretics* (and in half-a-dozen places besides) he declares: "The most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe." Apparently he either regards the possession of a view as far more essential than the expression of it, or else he considers the declaration that the universe is good or the universe is bad as a fair philosophic statement. To believe that everything is going right, or everything is going wrong, that things have been better than they are, or are bound to be so in the long run—this, if we may judge from the writings of G. K. Chesterton, is to be a philosopher. Any fundamental relation between ideas, any genuine system such as can be traced in the work of any of those whom mistaken mankind has in the past regarded as philosophers, seems, so

far as can be seen, entirely superfluous to this thinker. He contents himself with stroking the surface of a hundred pools of thought and sending up an occasional jetty of water to an unexpected, if futile height, thus astonishing both those whose intention it is to bathe placidly and those who have come to dive to the depths. Thus he places himself irrevocably among the clever critics and luminous litterateurs, and compels all equitable judgment of his work to be based upon its immediate artistic or utilitarian value.

A hasty examination of any hundred of the disconnected, unrelated commonplaces which he has so successfully phrased, must prove convincingly that Chesterton is no philosopher. As an artist in journalism his now incisive, and now buffeting style, and his pugnacious and dominating method, are, of course, admirable. As a moralist, his single interesting contribution is his violent and (recently) consistent opposition to progress (as defined above) in all its manifestations. This viewpoint, whatever may have been his original reasons for its adoption, seems to have become really his own, and it has brought him the firm and

genuine suport of very few who really know what it is. That mankind is moving forward to the sound of mighty, ever more inspiring music, is an almost undoubted fact. The arguments seem too conclusive to meet with rejection by any one less determined to be different than G. K. Chesterton.

Mr. Chesterton hails Plato as the most Shawesque of all men, and sees therefore no advance since his time. But there are a million men closer to Plato in the world to-day than were a thousand in his lifetime. Mankind has not risen to the spirituality of Jesus, but it can not be doubted that it is nearer to it to-day than ever. He, like every constructive radical, believed in man rather than men. He found himself surrounded by Scribes and Pharisees, but he saw beyond, behind the shadow of the centuries, a race that would be noble and pure and true. This very attitude in "progressives" to-day gives birth to Chesterton's chief criticism of them. He is that most perfect example of narrow-sightedness, the mystic who attempts to glorify the obviously unsatisfactory past. He imagines him-

self (and us) confronted by but one choice: that between the mysticism of religion and the materialism of science—failing to realize that the belief in “progress” is the most mystic of all religions, quite aside from its appeal to reason. But then, the retention of the reasoning faculty restrains one’s pleasure in reading Chesterton. It is possible to see too clearly. As has been said of Nietzsche, Chesterton understood is less suggestive to thinking than Chesterton misunderstood. To be appreciated, this Rock of Gibraltar against Radicalism must be seen through Mediterranean mists.

Nothing in life or conduct or in human development or in art or science appeals to Chesterton as really worthy of excitement. His fervor is devoted to a defence of the obvious—and the obvious is very seldom the true. His fear is for the failure of the unimportant—from the standpoint of most of mankind. Thinking humanity has become engrossed in what it regards as its real problems—the problems of its regeneration. Mr. Chesterton achieves originality by ignoring these and assuring us of the extraordinary importance of the simple acts of life: eating, drinking, fight-

ing and marrying; and of the farthest and most futile flights of thinking: the thought of why life exists, of what follows death, of what or who is master over these experiences. In a word, he devotes himself to the glorification of two factors in experience; those things which men do naturally, without thought, and those things which they do naturally without. "I cannot understand the people who take literature seriously," he says in *All Things Considered*. He might have extended his remark to thinkers in every other department of activity.

Mankind has become temporarily passionate for sensationalism. Our journals have satiated us with a certain sort; to be effective to-day one must discover new subjects to sensationalize. Chesterton has accomplished this, not only by forcing his way further into the fantastic, but also by returning to the obvious, and therefore most neglected realms.

Mr. McCabe and others have contended weightily against the Chesterton method, claiming that serious thoughts ought not to be exposed except in solemn raiment; still others, scenting an antagonism to their progressive no-

tions, have violently attacked his "theories." We cannot for a moment lend our support to either objection, our contention being simply and solely that in a thoroughly charming and adequate way, Mr. Chesterton gives us (in a philosophical sense) absolutely no theories at all.

He is unquestionably important in his particular field. As an ethical connoisseur of suggestive and thought-provoking power, he is second only to Shaw in present-day England. One man will read his writings with a continually mounting desire to answer back, another with a passion to imitate; it is possible a unique third may be moved to equally passionate agreement. He provokes scorn and hatred, love and envy; but always thought, and almost always pleasure. These are the characteristics of a clever, but not of a great writer. He always wounds or delights the mind, but never the heart. He moves one intellectually, but never emotionally or spiritually: and this is the first essential of the authentic artist. Chesterton may tell us that emotion is the only valid guide, but we believe it or not as we please; he does not make us *feel* that it is

so. In this, he again differs radically from Shaw, who, not strictly a philosopher (though he possesses a singularly complete and well-defended standpoint) is, even in his criticism, a superb creative artist.

In Shaw, constrained as he has forced himself to be, we feel the surge of almost overmastering desires, we see the supernal light of utterly unrealizable, and therefore supremely valuable, ideals. In Chesterton we are blinded by a burst of splendid sparks; we are never burned by the fires that should generate them.

No one need contend that it is harder to be serious than to be clever. It may even be more difficult to be clever than to be humorous or witty. The question is chiefly whether it is more worth while to produce a number of volumes of somewhat labored cleverness, lit with an occasional beam of witticism or whimsy, than it is to furnish the world with a bit of actualized soul, a creation brilliant with the superbly vital and yet superhuman flame of inspiration. The former is what Chesterton has done; the latter is literature. The former momentarily delights a large number of people, just as an effective and original cartoon

of our political situation does; the latter quickens the blood and starts a divine passion in the brain of certain men and women as long as life lasts upon earth.

Now it is in the creative efforts of a writer rather than in his criticism or biographies that we look for those elusive elements which so impress the human spirit with their depth and permanence that we characterize that in which they are contained as literature. In the novels of Mr. Chesterton, if anywhere, we should expect to find the most complete and perfect expression of his ideas, for in them he has given us absolutely nothing else.

In neither *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* nor *The Man Who Was Thursday*, nor in his more recent book, *The Ball and the Cross*, can he possibly pretend to the drawing of a single character. Their pages are populated with name-bearing progeny whose conversation is very edifying and enjoyable. It would be too much, however, to expect us to regard these cleverly constructed mimes as people. They are wonderfully simple organisms. Intellectually, each is infatuated with some single notion; and physically, but for the antics we are told of

their performing, we could be quite sure they did not exist. Each of the books is furnished with a dozen marionettes expressly built for the purpose of tossing ideas at the places where (were they men and women) their brains might be supposed to be.

In plot, the volumes are ingenious beyond brief description. At the opening of each we find the author inspired by a fanciful (almost imaginative) notion by means of which he gets his figures moving at lightning speed. They move so rapidly, in fact, that by the end of the third or fourth chapter they have no very particular place left to go to and are forced back to begin the fun over again. This time the journey proceeds with even greater expedition, and the bewildered reader finds himself ready for a third, then a fourth, and (if a sufficient number of pages are to be covered) for a fifth, sixth, seventh or eighth round of duplication. Finally, the originally inspired writer feels that something must be done to round up the race and so he pulls his crew into a conveniently located lunatic asylum (as in *The Ball and the Cross*) and the exhausted reader, feeling the divine appropriateness of

the end at least, wonders how the maddest mortal could have supposed that because a well-organized adventure delighted him at first perusal, he should be expected to cover the identical ground in an infinite number of repetitions.

In all three of the novels we are always hearing what the characters have said and done—never what they thought or what they were. They bounce from one pose to another, always doing something, forever talking, but never seeming to accomplish anything. In spite of the number and vivacity of their *acts*, one feels an utter lack of consistent and necessary *action*. The author seems to think it enough to make his opinionated puppets do—it makes very little difference what, or how, so long as they keep it up.

It is not so much a lack of reason as of rhythm. As manipulator, Chesterton is forced continually to recharge the rifle from which he shoots his circumstances, so that we get a rapid-fire succession of disconnected (though not dissimilar) happenings that is extremely disconcerting. The novels are not, like Meredith's, "chaos illumined by flashes of

lightning," but lightning almost entirely obscured in chaotic thunder clouds. Sometimes the blinding flame escapes in a flash; never for a moment is there the life-warmth of the sunlight. It is much as if a gray mist were torn to shreds of silver by unexpected gleams. At their best, his splendor causes an ecstatic shudder to run down the spine of the reader, which forces upon him a wild but momentary joy. Such flashes burn the mind into shape for future thinking.

It is not the writer who thrusts upon us totally undreamed ideas, nor is it (as Mr. Chesterton insists) he who tells us what we have always known but never expressed, who usually affords us pleasure; but it is that man who suggests, as Chesterton frequently does, by an audacious epigram which antagonizes or captivates us (in the end it makes little difference which), ideas which may carry us on to hours of unconfined contemplation.

All of the boldest and most personal of Chesterton's characteristics are illustrated by *The Ball and the Cross*. A brief study of the story, an examination of its participants, and an investigation of its insignificance, re-

veal the man at his best and at his worst. ✓

Two puppets, armed with antagonistic religious views and with no possible opinions on, or connection with, anything else in the universe, but nevertheless characterized with inexplicable bad humor as Scotchmen, disagreeing about the virginity of the Virgin, determine to fight each other. Both being somewhat more (or less) than lunatics, neither for a moment imagines that any genuine solution of their problem can possibly result from their duel, but their literary creator assures us from behind the stage that duelling is the only natural, logical and necessary exercise for two men in their position to embark upon. A dozen times, under the most varied and cleverly constructed conditions, they begin their combat, each time to be interrupted by the impressive figure of a British policeman or some other solid representative of respectable society. Each time they flee and, turning, behold the head of said policeman just rising over a mound or wall which always happens to be behind them.

The caperings of these enthusiasts from one geographical position to another, along with

some slight drifting from their original emotional situation, constitutes the total plot of the novel. Both the men (with such others as appear from time to time—femininity is practically excluded) are simply caustic mouthpieces of the Chestertonian entity. It makes little difference where this entity happens to lodge itself, whether in Professor Lucifer, the aeronaut, or Michael, the priest, or Turnbull, the atheist, or MacIan, the Highlander, it is utterly true to its own nature: its expression is always precisely the same.

The novel contains a possible ethical inference: that men would do better to abandon their philosophical, sociological, ethical or other controversies, and realize at once that the existence of a Deity is the only question of even the slightest importance to the race, and that to the determination of this problem every energy may be most worthily devoted. This is the only possible teaching of the book. There are, as usual, occasional successful epigrams, a number of suggestive paradoxes, perhaps even a subtly worded truth or two, but this is the sole large affirmative contribution of the volume.

In this novel, as in every other work, Chesterton shows himself as a bit of a moralist and much of a cleverist (to coin a necessary name for those who take their sense of humor seriously), but as neither a philosopher nor a creative artist.

How and where, then, must we classify him?

If we must do so, let us rank him where he naturally and logically belongs: as a charming charlatan who has captured the reading world by writing stupidity with brilliance.

What, indeed, are the great Chesterton affirmations? An approval of drink and metaphysics, of pugnacity and religion, from the pragmatic standpoint that all are healthy. On his negative side may be placed the denial of the progress of mankind toward the most perfect society that the world has seen, and the denial of the humanitarian insistence upon Man rather than definite men. These are the fundamentals of his attitude; yet, in spite of them, he adores Shaw and worships Christ, the greatest progressive and the greatest humanitarian in History.

Whoever has something really tremendous to say, may possibly be read by some people

even if he be serious; but let him have very little of any possible consequence to say and yet utter it gloriously, and the public falls prostrate at his feet. Notwithstanding that he has never created a character, Chesterton proved himself a good psychologist. Instead of wasting years in finding out whether he was really arriving at any ideas, he proceeded with unflinching vigor to the long and arduous, but well-recompensed, task of developing a means of satisfying the great literary demand of the day: cleverness of expression.

The labors of half a lifetime have met with adequate reward, and we find him who might, after years of striving, have expressed a few trivial additions to the fund of intellectual material mankind is heir to, roaming the fields of writing, visionless and uncreative, but abundantly and brilliantly prolific. Let us furnish this man with an unstinted measure of enthusiasm, let us be frank and fearless in our appreciation of his accomplishment, and do not let us belittle the glory of this by wrongly classifying it with the less interesting work of the thinkers and the dreamers.

A VISIT TO G. K. C.

Beaconsfield is the little village, forty minutes out of London, where the arch cleverist of his age resides. Coming to it, as I did, at night, I saw only the glimmering station and the stone railway bridges, the houses near and far as I passed in my cab, and finally the ivy-netted cottage approached by stony steps reared beside possibly medieval, but delicate and thriving flower beds, in which dwell both the Chestertons.

I speak quite justly of the Chestertons, Gilbert Keith and Frances, his wife. A very famous literary personage in England has told me that without the one there could not have been the other. My visit led me to believe as much.

I was left by a sprightly, possibly orthodox maid in a parlor hung with prints and water colors—good ones—and dotted with books in revolving cases and pretty little vases partly filled with flowers. But very soon came the tremendous person I was there to visit.

I had expected a large man. I had been told

and prepared. But seeing him, I gave a little inward gasp. Chesterton is enormous. His head is massive, his hair thick, his neck fat, his belly capacious, and he must be six feet three in height. I was a pigmy in the left-handed grasp of a giant. I saw the right hand, dangling helplessly in its sling. For only a day or two before, the medieval gardener had left a medieval tub before the medieval door step on which the world's sublimest propagandist of medievalism was forced to march forth, into the open and modernity. In this case Humpty Dumpty had a great fall and the broken right arm was a relic. *The Weekly Illustrated News* still gets its medieval page, but this is now being quite modernly dictated.

Chesterton I found no heretic in hospitality. I was gathered glowingly into the larger dining room, and there we proceeded at once to feasting on appropriately named Benedictine and cigars that were no doubt called Franciscans, tho as they were without wrappers, I cannot be sure.

We discoursed as we drank our cordial from appropriately capacious tumblers.

Shall I truthfully confess to the utterance of ninety words from half-past eight till half-past ten? That surely does not impugn the master conversationalist's abilities.

Chesterton is a phrase maker of rare, quick wit and jolly humor. You readers of him could have guessed it—that his talk is but a slightly milder literacy just as his writing is but a sublimated conversation. He talks well and much, humorously, sincerely and very tolerantly. And listening to him, you realize that no one could possibly be a jollier, plesanter companion.

“Even if the majority of people in a generation get away from the normal, as they do to-day, we must not forget the line of conduct that is normal to history and the race. We must not take the exception and try to make the average live up to it.”

This is not exactly what he said—he may have said something clever—but this is what has remained in my memory as the sense of his speech. It struck me as an unusually excellent and brief expression of the real Chesterton, of everything that he stands for and all that he

means. It could be applied to marriage, to government, to social intercourse and art, and I do not think he has expressed it quite so clearly elsewhere.

"The *difference* between man and woman is responsible for almost everything that has ever happened," he said. "We must realize that when we try to make man and woman alike."

That, again, suggests the value to the pioneers themselves of Chesterton's eternal questioning of progress. They must answer him before they can sensibly proceed. They must know whether they want things to happen differently in the future and they must try to know and face the vast effect on all events that sexual equality will have.

For the first time I learned of Chesterton's expedition into the province of the graphic arts. He had always scribbled hobgoblins and gargoyles and demons on his manuscript. But a few years ago he prepared a bouquet of cartoons, political and otherwise, some of which were used for a tract, Hilaire Belloc's. A few copies of these were issued by a publisher and possibly some sold. He allowed me to

take home a few of the unpublished pencil drawings and they are gloriously characteristic of his jollity. Mrs. Chesterton, who was curled up on a stool in the fireplace during our first three glasses, left to fetch the drawings, returned, admiring them, mediævally wifelike and frowned when I criticised.

Two hours with the man removes for all time one's allegiance to the current folly that Chesterton's ideas are jokes. His point of view may be ridiculed, but his sincerity is anything but ridiculous. "St. Augustine and the rest thought as I do, but then it wasn't customary to write humorously," is his explanation.

A VISIT TO H. G. WELLS

Mr. Wells is so conscious of his fame that he frequently fails to sign his letters. I am not an autograph collector, but I was somewhat disturbed when I received a card neatly written upon and enclosed in an envelope post-marked "Hampstead," with Mr. Wells' address stamped in raised letters within, and apparently written by him but entirely lacking any kind of signature. To make sure, I was forced to communicate with a New Yorker mentioned on the card who was supposed to have received a letter from Mr. Wells at the same time.

My astonishment was somewhat less when, during my last day in Paris, a telegram came from Ireland inviting me to be at the National Liberal Club in London on Wednesday evening. Mrs. Wells had written to me a couple of times regarding the matter and so I felt certain that I should ask for her husband when I found myself under the marble archway of the Liberal Party's London headquarters, attacked by gorgeously dressed attendants deter-

mined to find out the cause of my presence within the sacred portals.

Of course I started post haste for the Gare du Nord. I passed stormily from Boulogne to Folkstone, arrived wearily at Charing Cross and was driven to a friend's in Bedford Square, who possessed too much old British hospitality to hear of my going to a hotel.

At five minutes before eight I waited in the visitors' room in the Liberal Club's liberal quarters in Whitehall, by the side of a heavily whiskered Frenchman to whom I was afterwards introduced. He was Mr. Davray, the translator of all of Mr. Wells' books. Not many minutes had expired, or much patience, when mine host arrived. We wandered upwards to the dining hall and to melons and hors d'oeuvres and beef and ice cream, all of them mellowed by a sparkling Madeira.

Wells is a little man. He is thin and so is his hair; his eyes are unimpressive and his moustache is straggly. None of the Parliamentarians about us, failing to know him, would have guessed the presence of England's greatest writer, of the one man who is pictur-

ing to this age, and interpreting for all time, the method of thought and the progress of his generation. Wells it is who, better than any one else, is synthesizing modernity for itself.

Well, we sat there: Davray with his great, impressive beard, Wells with his measly moustache and myself—devouring the good things of this world, and talking of a better world to come.

We all know well what Mr. Wells believes. He has told us so carefully himself, particularly in *First and Last Things*. But Wells, like all great personalities, is not only a creature of moods but a man made up of several entities, of many separate co-ordinately developing characters, all contributing to the great central Liberalism that we have come to know as the keynote of his spirit, as it was of William James' and is of Henri Bergson's. Wells embraces all the tendencies of his time because he tolerates them all. Motivated by a divine curiosity, controlled by an infinite tolerance, he marches godlike where earthly angels fear to tread. In this, he may be, as the proverb says, a fool, but his foolishness is the foolishness of the all-wise.

The career of the man represents the progress of a personality. He started telling us stories that were good for us to read. He ends by giving us thoughts that are good for us to know. When Bernard Shaw began to print his ideas there was almost no response. Then he turned to telling stories (in play form) and became the most talked-of figure in the English-speaking world. Now, once more, he is back at the old pedagogic work, but he retains the form with which he made himself the astonishment of the age. Wells has grown more gradually from the little man he started to be, up into the great figure that is his present self.

Wells showed, even as early as 1895, by the production of his *Select Conversations with an Uncle*, that he had more than an inventive talent. But these little writings upon little themes, though clever and perspicacious, are limited and uncertain. They suggest the affectations of Max Beerbohm, without possessing the fineness of his touch; and affectations, like sweet pickles, should be exquisitely sugared and soured to be in perfect taste.

There is but one affectation about Wells' "sci-

entific" stories, which he published before he discovered his capability at characterization, and this is the affectation of imagination. There is no genuine imagination in beating out cleverness of the type of Dr. Moreau's Island or The Time Machine. They are more subtle, simpler, and better written than the stories of Jules Verne, but only in this are they superior to them or to the widely circulating tales of Nicholas Carter. The point of view, the inventive quality necessary for their construction is the same. Some people may define imagination so as to include the strange meanderings of this type of story. But such folk are at least compelled to admit that they are lacking in that important element of all great works of the imagination: inspiration. The early Wells stories are not struck forth by a creative hand; they are manufactured products, put together piecemeal, none of them written in any but the calmest and most conscious mood. Inspiration is essentially the soaring of one's soul without the knowledge of one's mind. In the gleaming moment, the mind becomes the wage-slave of the spirit, receiving in

return for labor the gratifying hallucination of having itself done the work.

The Wonderful Visit is the earliest Wells book shot with his satire and suggesting the imagination that is to come. Satire is like smoking: the real craving for it comes only in maturity after the sweet-pickle stage has passed away. Here in this book we have the glimmerings of a mature Wells. Explanations are waived; personality is emphasized. In *The Food of the Gods* the advance is unmistakable. Neither this nor any of his earlier "scientific" stories are novels in the higher sense, for they are not slices of the meat of life steeped in its warm, red blood, but in them the Wells of *Kipps* and *Love and Mr. Lewisham* appears in embryo.

This Wells of *Kipps* and *Lewisham* is one of the rarest spirits of the decade. He is akin to Barrie but mightier and more genuine than Barrie. He is a bit like W. J. Locke but he is deeper, more significant than Locke. In all three there is the same youth and gentleness, for all three are old enough to have learned youthfulness, and strong enough to be kind.

The new Wells that was born with *Tono-Bungay* is carried to its natural consummation in "The New Machiavelli." This is the greatest and the least artistic of his books. It is, in fact, abominably inartistic. It is the blood-full mind, the burning intellect running riot—magnificently running riot under the influence of an ungovernable mentality. There is no control. There is no attempt at control. The statesman-philosopher who abandons public life because of an extra-marital "affaire," is, of course, reminiscent of Wells himself. All his books are so. But this, and all the rest of the story, are merely incidental. It is his thoughts in retirement that Wells values. The book will stand or fall before posterity on its presentation of the inner consciousness of this age.

Problems of every sort are given paragraphs—often chapters. Events of every sort, involving all complexities, are dealt with possibly more frankly than in any other book. It is a sombre work but the strain of joy runs deep in its writing. It is the joy of him who realizes all the sorrows of the world.

Much has been written of *The New Machiavelli* as a philosophical consideration of the

liberal movement in contemporary England. But it is not from its acute political discussion that the book gains its most fundamental significance any more than it is because Tono Bungay brought vividly to light the methods of modern business that it is a book capable of sinking beneath the surface consciousness of its readers. *The New Machiavelli* is a significant novel beyond any that have appeared in many years. It is significant because of its absolute reality, of its uncompromising frankness, of its fearless truth. As the life of Remington, the hero, progresses, every point, every condition, whether of early training, family relationship, scholarship, sex interests, or anything else, is discussed, pictured for the reader in unmistakable sincerity.

This is what makes *The New Machiavelli* a great book, and which stamps H. G. Wells as a great man—perhaps the greatest man in England today. Neither Thackeray nor Dickens, nor any novelist who has since been given us has been capable of this same fearless truth; nor has any possessed the same vigorous ability to deal with practically all the questions

of life and conduct in the same intellectually satisfying manner.

I found myself thinking all these things as I sat looking at the little man—looking him over, one might almost say.

On our evening together the practical and scientific Wells was uppermost, and, like all frank moderns, being interested in sex, we talked of it, and Wells was matter-of-fact, extraordinarily, I thought. It's all very simple after you get over the romance stage," he said. Strange words, they seemed to me, from one who had expressed so often the nuances, the variabilities of this most universal and dominant impulse. "Your American women," he continued, "don't seem to know that anything exists below the diaphragm." It was all quite simple to this literateur of biological proclivities.

Afterwards we walked up the yellow marble staircase to the rooms where "the party is held together"—presumably through receptions held by recently created Liberal nobleman who generously shake hands with Commoners and local representatives from English rural communities.

It was all very strange: this most revolutionary of English novelists attempting to be "constructive" by belonging to the old-fashioned finance-dominated National "Liberal" Club. All about were beefy members—the bulwark of Merrie England—smoking their cigars and guffawing gorgeously.

We talked of American politics and the inevitable Roosevelt and both our countries' need of freedom from the professional politician and the legal type of mind "that tries to talk much and do nothing," to win in argument rather than to establish truth. We were both agreed that Socialism presented the only complete constructive program in the world today and equally that Socialism was not the property of any party or any group: it might come anyhow, in ways unknown or undreamed. Then Davray told us of the new plan of proportional representation in France, ten-thirty struck, and the evening was at an end. Davray and I sauntered out on the square, fronting on Westminster Abbey and the Gothic Towers of the Houses of Parliament, all of them dull and gloomy through a drizzling rain. Wells

went up to the room he had taken for the night, hoping to sleep, as he said, "the jolly sleep of all good Liberals."

THE TRAGEDY OF THE FINALIST.

Finality is the goal of the small-spirited. The search for it is unending, since in the things of life that count, it is not to be found. Our present century is teaching us to deal not in absolutes but in relativities. In the relating of one fact to another, in applying this to that, lies the solution of our problems; those questions that require final answers we are prepared to hand on to another generation—twenty or a hundred generations hence.

The small scientist, working over his microscope, perhaps on a specimen of a genus not one man in ten thousand ever sees, demands that his experiment be perfect in result. As the problem enlarges, the exactness of its solution becomes less possible. And the problems of our social life are the largest that confront any of the sciences.

We are searching in the world for a method of living. For the attainment of this we find it necessary to secure some approximate understanding of our own character, of that of the people about us, and of the physical and material world at large. These are our supreme es-

entials. Our need for them is as self-evident as for anything conceivable by the mind of man. Toward them proceeds the unthinking search of every groping child; they are the unrealized or the conscious goal of all sane humanity.

Such understanding of one's self and other men and the qualities of the world is known to be in its very nature incomplete and relative, and is accepted as such. With it as a goal man has achieved art and science, comfort, knowledge, and all that we think of as civilization. But built up along with this has been the craving for finalities, the seeking for truths that one might think of as essential, for existences that it might be imagined would never die.

Alas, the appetite for the everlasting has been the damage of the ages. The effort at its gluttonous satisfaction has left history reeking with carnage, injustice and despair. The tale of its dogmatic onlaughts on the happiness of men is more dire than the combined quintessence of all tragedies conceived from "Oedipus" to "Ghosts".

The genius of each age cried out in protest, but mankind rushed madly on, crushing oppon-

ents of the belief in final things. Gradually these grew. Today they are powerful; and now at last we glimpse the coming of a new mindfulness for the things of this world.

Death is the only Finalist who remains a master. The rest of those who assumed to inform us of the birthplace of the stars and the destiny of oceans are quietly being left to take care of little children on the morning when they are not in school and their parents require an approved, convenient way of being rid of them. It is not a destruction; Man is merely stepping aside from the fictions created by his fathers, neither denying nor discarding them, but merely concerning himself with his business: the increase of the joy of life for all. This will make use of all the energies and understanding that the race can bring to it.

Meanwhile the Finalists are stricken. No more armies go forth under their banners, no governments rise or fall at their dictation and life goes hurryingly forward whether they will or no. It is well that we should travel at nerve-wracking pace: we have centuries of wasted effort from which to recover.

PINERO THE PUNCTILIOUS

Neopolitan, although the most varied, is the least imaginative of ices; the drama, most complex of the arts, is also the most capable of exact judgment. Scarcely any angle of attitude can be assumed which does not find its application in the theatre.

It depends entirely upon our individual fancy whether we relish the inspired pugnacity of Shaw; the idealistic harmonies of Hauptmann; the soft, sweet mysteries of the early plays of Maeterlinck or the perfervid power of his later ones; the titanic rapture of Ibsen's poetic dramas or the vigorous soul-tossing and twisting and tormenting of his social works.

Something in us establishes inclinations and our responses to art are fixed by them. There are still those who enjoy Pinero. They pretend to admire him: his creation of fine phrases; they talk of him as a sublime technician or struggle to regard him as the moulder of profound human destinies. This, they say, is Art; not propaganda, radicalism, problem presentation, or any other substitute for the naive superficialities that delight them. Such folk

like Sudermann. For this there is, of course, the excuse that these two writers are of our time. The *Zeitgeist* grips them and us and their petty fumbblings with a pretended infinite tweak some temporarily responsive chord in our souls.

One cannot quarrel with the worshippers of the mediocre. After all, it is better that they should be given good examples of such theatrical pabulum as they will swallow. But why not examine the flaws that are measurable by our common, accepted dramatic standards?

The lines of a Pinero play are clever. Well-wrought spokesmen are thrown before us who speak in "good, set terms." They are never at a loss for a word; their customary form of address is the epigram. Of course in the farces, to achieve an easy laugh, they halt; but with calculation and accuracy. Is wit, our wondrous heritage from the most serious immortals, merely this forced product of trumped up farce, or this equally forced comedic repartee? When Pinero is not clever he is dull. Once in a while he is saved by the looming of a possible climax, then comes the conscious

craftsmanship again, killing the chance of vigorous, sincere plain dealing.

As for the folk, a certain clamminess clings to even their liveliest moments.

Shaw's Mrs. Warren defends her past; poor Mrs. Tanqueray is sorry for it. At the thought of her lost innocence she bursts into tears. When her stepdaughter discovers and identifies her she becomes ineffectually frantic. All this is photographic of a certain type of "society" puppet—a type that it is difficult to use for the creation of sustaining tragedy.

Mrs. Ebbsmith flashes into the range of the really interesting and is backed down to the Pinero level by the astounding introduction of the mechanical religious motive. Nero burned Rome to achieve a theatric excitement. Pinero merely kills a character.

With the help of the thoughtless and visionless, Iris, Pinero has created his most perfect—and perfectly useless play. Snatched from the drawing-room, Pinero people embody the most disgusting attributes of those with "advantages," in actual life. Each year gives us a new play, each with an advance in reality and distastefulness. Finally, in *Mid-Channel* and

The Thunderbolt conventionality has become so even conventionally unattractive one wonders why such husbands and wives should ever have had the slightest desire to possess each other.

What is the depth of distress in these "tragedies?" Where is the harrowing of spiritual vitals that stirs and strengthens? Overeating at an unvaried meal gives the same mild distaste. One need not go to the theatre.

Of course the characters are "real." That is why they are not stirring. They conform to our conventional conceptions. They are so actual that they are commonplace, uncreative. Ibsen's people transcend the lifelike. They are all personalities. In their veins courses a super-vital fluid. They are not obvious, but true. In Pinero we feel the actuality and therefore the particularity, by instinct. That is why he does not influence us. That is true of every situation. He speaks before us, not to us. Each snatch from life must be judged by the individuality of its own conditions—and it is never exactly us he is picturing. Ibsen's lessons are special and yet dominantly universal. There theatric conditions are non-essential. A

Doll's House is a piece for every wife and every husband; Little Eyolf is a play for the mothers and fathers of the world. Before we are ready for judgment of a Pinero play we must recollect the country and caste which he casts. This intellectualizes our interest and we come to view his dramas, not to live them.

What does it matter that Pinero's latest plays are well done in the kind of construction we admire today. The early ones, even as far up as *Iris* are weak even in this. The *Gay Lord Quex* is talked of as the perfect comedy, and is really not particularly comic. It would be a drama were it not for its lack of significance and weak, indistinctly drawn characters.

To ruin the idea of *Mid Channel* by developing it in a plot that is not inevitable; by means of characters that are meaningless and uninspiring, and some of them unnecessary; to distribute almost no dramatic material through two acts and then crowd the remaining part, seems scarcely less shameful than Mrs. Ebb-smith's bible snatching at the close of the best two acts Pinero ever wrote. But if one must have characters whose only concern in life is

love-making, ideas, of course, must be tossed on the scrap heap.

Pinero is the Franz Liszt of drama. His keen exposés of the commonplace are as actual as folk songs. However distorted, amplified, conventionalized, they remain believable demonstrations. We never doubt their factitiousness. But their truth—that is another matter. To be true, one must have an idea, a message, a religion. One cannot simply peck at experience.

Mr. Arnold Bennett talks of ours as an age of realism. But mere reality will never satisfy us. The exposition of actuality is not creative. Zola and his like do not blast the watch towers of the infinite and throw open to our gaze the verity behind them. This interpretative demonstration is what man craves; he demands drama that builds as well as exposes life. A sophisticated understanding of life is simply a primitive intellectual necessity to the artist; beyond it lies a naïveté of soul that has kept all great creators forever child-like and wonder-smitten.

JOTTINGS IN EUROPE

Countries and continents, like colognes, have their essences. They have also their *nuances*, their vagaries, their illusive qualities and their illusory dreams. But they possess, nevertheless, certain factors that are fundamental, permanent and typical.

America has rendered typical of itself those two useful words that stand so often on either side of swinging doors: "Push" and "Pull." Europe, while subject to characterization by no pair of monosyllables, is nevertheless capable of as precise qualification. It is in the effort to render definite the manifestation of "Europeanism," in its various phases, as differentiated from "Americanism" that I have written these thumb-nail sketches. They are slight, suggestive and unelaborate, but there may be some who find in them a measure of truth and they are therefore offered to my fellow Americans without apology.

I

Between the Louvre and the Arc de Triomphe lies the essence of Paris, for there it is that the kingly gardens of the Tuileries recline,

there swings from north to south the royal Champs Elysée, and there as well are scattered those haunts of elegance and ugliness and vice, the music halls for which Paris is famed. What could be more grotesque than a five-minute walk from the Venus de Milo to the Théâtre Marigny—from the contemplation of antiquity's ideal of love to modernity's conception of Lust? Yet this is possible in Paris.

Paris is the most dignified and the most ludicrous, the gayest and the saddest city in the world. Great, immortal buildings; great, immortal art; petty, stupid, ugly waste—all in one seething mass, making a city! It is glorious, beautiful, fruitless and futile, constructed without purpose, tending toward no end and yet fine and rapturous and inspired as nothing in America has ever been!

When a friend of mine in Paris was asked some years ago what he thought ought to be done with the old Palais Royale, which all readers of Dumas will so well remember, he replied, "Why, keep it as a hospital for the people who are run over every day in front of it at the end of the Avenue de L'Opera. They need never

move out of it: they can buy everything they want in the shops underneath and they can live delightfully in the apartments upstairs." Street accidents do not worry Paris, and old buildings are made useful. Watch the melee of cabs and buses, automobiles and business wagons on every avenue and you will stop wondering why the population is decreasing.

II

Really the geographers are wrong. England is in London and London is Boston raised to the n th power.

Imagine a country full of Bostonians! Of course, there are other types—as there are in Boston. There is Keir Hardie, M. P., for instance. There are the Celts, ranging all the way from Bernard Shaw and George Moore to William Butler Yeats. Besides that there are Lord Rothschild, Mrs. Pankhurst and D'Albert Chevalier. But Boston, one must not forget, has its B. O. Flower and Governor Foss. England at heart has become a perfected, standardized New England. I say this advisedly, for it is only in recent years that the gizzard has gone out of Britain. There was a time

when its people ate beef, drank small beer (whatever that may be) and knew what they wanted and how to get it—or at least go about getting it. Now it is simply a question of more warships than your neighbor and trust to luck. As Mr. Frank Harris put it in speaking of King George's rehearsals, at a festive, conversational luncheon to which he invited me, "You can't imagine William the Conqueror being taught how he should be crowned." That witty man alleges, moreover, that several coronets threatened to depart from the semi-royal heads on which they were ensconced at the most recent ceremony and had to be manipulated to stay on.

Yet, the English are attractive. They have the attraction for us that a full blooded bull must have for an overworked kyute with a can tied on his tail that he's afraid of banging every time he moves. Englishmen know what to do. More importantly, they know (what few Americans even realize) what not to do. We are brazen in the face of Hell—and Heaven. The Englishman is more critical—of himself. He prefers not to ram his head in-

to a wall even if he knows it isn't stone and that he can get through it. First he finds out, if he can, what's on the other side. Englishmen are courteous—even to "foreigners." It was not in England that a hostess, asking her guest at tea to have another cake, and receiving the reply, "No, thanks, I have had two already," answered, "No—you've had five, but take another anyway." That could only have happened in New York!

Englishmen, like Continentals, know how to live. Just as they seriously attempt to find out what to do and quite as much what not to do, so they determine what they want and as definitely what they do not want. It is not, as with us, continually a case of living up to someone else's income.

Englishmen hurry almost as little as Germans. At five they have tea, whether they make a fortune or lose one, and nothing but a theatre engagement (or poverty) prevents their two-hour dinner at eight.

There is a tale told of an Englishman (and not by an idiot) who, arriving in New York, was taken in the subway by a friend. They

boarded a local, changed to an express, and returned to a local, all on the way to their destination. The return trip was made in the same manner, hurrying all the time and running most of it. "Why," asked the "foreigner," out of breath, "why do you run about this way?" "Come on," cried the New Yorker excitedly, "I save two minutes!" "But what," was the sane reply, "what do you do with the two minutes?"

Who of us in America knows what he does with the minutes? We have no more idea what we do with the dollars. We spend them, we waste them, we throw them away on things that tire us. We used to accomplish mighty physical things. We mastered a continent. We created greater wealth than had ever been dreamed of in the world. Now that we cannot keep up with the pace in accomplishment, we take it out in hurrying.

III

Italy is the land of love, listlessness and Last Suppers. It also possesses excellent *patisserie* and very poor railways. It has been called, at various times, by folk more or less imaginative or given to indigestion, "the land of art,"

“the land of history,” and “the land of poverty.”

Italy has a number of old cathedrals, which are left standing because their steps furnish suitable resting places for venders of postcards, who saunter forth gayly in droves from undetected corners as soon as a foreigner is found gazing at “their” building. There are old women whose backs have taken on a picturesque curve that one can conceive being the fashion in a hundred years; there are middle-aged men who pretend to speak French for the sake of Americans who pretend to understand it; then occasionally there is a young boy who is still naive enough to hope to sell something because someone wants it. Once permit these vampires to come within a dozen yards and they hold you with their cries and vociferations. Escape is never afforded unless one is clever at pretending to be insane and then venders will giggle, pretend to be frightened and go away satisfied. You see it is all a matter of pretense everywhere in Italy.

In purchasing anything it is necessary to pretend at the same time both that you admire

it and that you do not wish to buy it. If the salesman believes you do not admire his wares he will never really care to sell them to you—though he may try with what seems to us a good deal of avidity. He is always interested, however, in making you live up to your own better nature (which is favorably impressed with his goods) and if he succeeds he can slap himself on the back ethically as well as artistically.

Love in Italy is like sand in Sahara. The country has been a region of romance for so many years that it takes it as a matter of course. In America we are afraid of love, in England they are ashamed of it, in Germany they are obsessed with it, and in Italy they are tired of it. Of course, the people go right on loving and marrying, cohabiting and procreating, but it is simply a matter of habit. The prostitutes are even more business-like than New York's. As for the listlessness of Italy, that is a matter of genuine intellectual conviction. It is not really warm in Italy. Milan in summer is considerably cooler than Boston, and even Rome rarely rivals New Orleans in diabolic temperatures. It is simply that the Ital-

ians do not believe in our methods and manners. They eat fully and so they must give themselves opportunity for digestion. Their cathedrals and mural decorations support many of them and a large number of others make remarkable beverages and foodstuffs with things they pick up in the streets. I think comparatively few Italians admire great art, though all of them admire other people's admiration for it. That is a signal difference between most Europeans and all Americans, none of whom ever admire anything that they do not possess or are not on the way to possessing.

Italy owns about a thousand "Last Suppers." Some of them are painted on walls or ceilings while others are chopped up and put into frames. Many of them look far better on post-cards than in the originals and none of the painters have supplied the divine assemblage with any dietary superfluities. Holbein, with true German generosity, was quite the first to victual the table as he who allowed his head to be bathed in costly ointment would certainly have had it.

The great "Last Supper" of Leonardo da

Vinci, the glorious composition and drawing of which is ardently admired by every one who has not seen it in the original, is in a condition of almost complete dissolution. Strangers still go out to the church of Sta. Maria Della Grazia, however, and two old women are permitted to receive them, and their tips, while white clothed monks wander about interestingly whenever there is any excuse for doing so—though the da Vinci section itself is in the control of the Government.

The poor live very inexpensively in Italy and the rich extravagantly. There are large private dwellings of the character of Carnegie's or the Vanderbilts' in New York (though not generally all of stone) and the best hotels serve perhaps the finest *tables d'hote* in the world. Life in the larger cities is not unlike that of London and Berlin though there is far less interest in intellectual pursuits. On the other hand, Italians are pious frivolously while Parisians and Germans are impious religiously.

IV

It may be said that because Germans do not live any longer than Americans they do not

live so much. But, after all, one lives only as one is conscious of living, and we Americans hurry about in a condition of semi-consciousness that is not life. We have no repose and therefore little thought. Our working classes are without leisure and our leisure classes are too busy searching for amusement to achieve happiness.

Life to most people—or happiness in life—signifies simply the going from one agreeable sensation to another in quick and interesting succession. The only desires of the average man are “life” and luxury and love. The Germans satisfy these interests—or lusts, if you must call them so. We do not. It is not that we crave their satisfaction the less. We do not satisfy our desire for life because we do not understand it, nor our desire for luxury because, being ashamed of it, we become crude in seeking its satisfaction, nor our desire for love, because that frightens us out of our wits.

Most true Americans are Puritans and all Puritans are perverts. Their perversion consists in a super-sex-consciousness turned in and against itself. Just as only those greatly

and emotionally inclined toward sex, adopt that subject as their intellectual specialty, so only those insanely obsessed with sex crusade against it.

The intelligent German does his work calmly and with precision. He lives in the same manner. He eats sufficiently and well; he rests two hours in the middle of the day; and he drinks his beer, fearlessly, quietly and inoffensively. There are no saloons in Germany, though there are beer gardens everywhere. Whiskey is very unpopular, and drunkenness exceedingly uncommon.

V

A glacial scene of snow and ice, stretching above vaporous clouds on every hand, and joining below with rocky cliffs and green hillocks with sheep upon them—just such a scene as one sees on any moderately clear day from the *Kleine Scheidegg*—is as typical of Switzerland as anything, save one, could be. That one thing is the glass-clad dining porch of any good hotel in Basel or Lucerne or Interlaken, with its tables populated side by side, with a German family of six, a Frenchman and his mistress

(or even possibly his wife!), an English brother and sister, Russian girls out for a holiday, American *nouveaux riches* bent on living up to their incomes, and an Italian laborer or nobleman—it is seldom apparent which.

Switzerland is the land of inclusiveness and therefore of Democracy. One cannot remain a snob eight thousand feet above sea level, when one's head is buzzing and one's nose threatens a hemorrhage. Just as little can one "slight" one's neighbor when the latter is some sort of European linguist while oneself is struggling with forgotten German genders and a never learned vocabulary of French. English is understood—but vaguely, doubtfully, and quite above all, most expensively. Let anyone be known as an American and his room rent goes up two francs, while tips that would have been accepted smilingly, with thanks, are scornfully pocketed with evident dissatisfaction.

It is a curse for any but the rich to be Americans in Switzerland. German and French lend themselves to vociferous objection—"Donnerwetter" or "*Fils d'un chien*" sound convincing—but English is for apologetic, tem-

perate acceptance only. He who rebukes a cabman in New Yorkese is laughed at—or growled upon. A foreign language, well-spoken, deducts twenty per cent from one's expenses.

There are *Kursaals* in Switzerland that may remind those who have been there of Monte Carlo. For a couple of francs one can see gaming tables and listen to mild lewdness and poor music. There are the cries of "*Fait le jeu, messieurs,*" the raking of the spoils; the watchers, bored but slyly observant; the money changers, the crowds of every sort and nationality, the rolling balls, the lights, but none of the sorrow and the tragedy of the great gambling centers. One enjoys the ineffable sensation of being wicked for a franc! Five francs is the limit and few are wild enough to play it. Then for those who prefer to spend, rather than lose, money there are the French musical comedies with their laughable indecency, their picturesque costumes, their golden haired girls and pleasing dearth of chorus men—compared to our New York pandering to the matinee girl. Do we not show by the presence of

these droves of males upon the American musical comedy stage more than by anything else, the American's subservience to woman? European men please themselves; they spend their own money *with* their wives (instead of working themselves to death *for* them), they eat well and quietly, smoke when they please and drink in moderation—none of which prevents a great many of them, from believing in woman's right to equality and none of which prevents them from retaining their women's respect, consideration and love.

VI

Paris and London are cities that have personalities. Berlin would have had if the Kaiser had not tampered with its development in his attempt to create a second Paris. The "gaiety" of Berlin is a weighty, conscious affair like the gaiety of an elephant who has been living with baboons.

New York, too, may possess its deeply personal factor. The poets have written of its clanging elevated railways, its roaring subways, its dazzling skyscrapers, its dirt, delightful-

ness, commerce, wealth and poverty. But the European capitals are like the European character: they are established, settled and unchanging. The German is dull, studious and effective; the Frenchman sprightly, faithless and negligent; the Englishmen courteous, cold and egotistic. London is cold, Paris is hot; London is busy and preoccupied, Paris is lustful, listless and loquacious.

London streets are a mass of busses; London theatres a mass of shirt bosoms and London clubs a mass of yawns. Business is more reposeful in Paris than society is in London. Both are a bore in Berlin.

It is difficult to describe what makes the Englishman cry "Dear old London!" when he comes in at Paddington—but he means it. If it is evening, he sees the lights, lights, lights on every side along the streets, the moving trams and the dashing busses, the dim, grey, governmental buildings and the respectful poor. In the daylight all is quick with life—and without hurry.

There are those who dislike the commercial quality of London, who detest the miles of streets lined with small shops. But business

in London has an inoffensive air; it does not intrude itself, and there are other things. Every few streets, in the midst of the petty everyday, is some huge building, redolent with history: Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, the British Museum and the National Gallery are only the most important and impressive of a hundred. You cannot find such in America. Nor have we the pretty little squares that crop up everywhere, with their inevitable trees and grass and flower beds.

Paris, in sunny France, is not so green. Paris has not the touch of the "Beyond." Like the French themselves it is sprightly and obvious, with little reserve power. Shudder once or twice at the impressiveness of the Louvre, give a dozen hours' interest to Notre Dame and the Pantheon, see three pictures in the Luxembourg, walk in the Bois, the Avenue de l'Opera and the Quartier, and Paris is a mystery made manifest. There is something of the infinite in London; something of the eternal, of the universal and the inexpressible.

VII

The churches, like the other amusements of

Europe, differ considerably one from another. In Paris, they are generally places whither one comes to pray and whence one goes to scoff.

The small Paris churches have a greater number of grotesque figures of the Virgin than an imaginative American could have conceived existent in the world. Some have blue gowns and red noses, others are clothed in golden raiment fit for the Bal Bullier.

In London and Berlin, where churches are free and Protestant, the people go in greater numbers to the theatres, operas and concerts. That may be a reason for the excellence of German music and English stage-management. Not that the Munich level is everywhere preserved in Germany: in Frankfurt one can see as bad a performance of Italian opera as one pleases. Nor are the theatres of London run upon the level of the Kingsway, where that extraordinary master of finesse in dialog and interpretation, Granville Barker, holds hour-long discussions with his casts during time that is generally spent by directors in howling out commands. Not another manager anywhere could have given "Fanny's First Play"

as London had it for a year and a half, nor has anyone produced "The Winter's Tale," as it appeared in England a season later. But one can see an average play handled with thorough adequacy any night in London, while in New York one must often choose to see a better play miserably murdered. In Berlin at the Kleines or Deutches Theaters or several others, one sees excellent work excellently done. It is, I suppose, because the middle class, omitting hurry from its program, has time not only to eat and drink beer, but also to think, read and develop good taste.

VIII

Abroad vice stalks abroad. Here we suppose most other people live quite virtuously. We are perfectly aware that we ourselves have our occasional glasses of beer, that we puff our sustaining pipes, but we don't tell others much about what we do or believe for fear of hurting them and their opinion of us.

Continental Europe looks at these things quite differently. There it is not considered quite the same offense for a man and a woman to seek happiness together without consulting

a minister or magistrate, as for a man to strangle his brother, poison his mother and shoot the policeman who comes to arrest him. As Dr. W. J. Robinson put it: "We in America are continually confusing vice with crime." Europeans are in advance of us in realizing the difference.

There is, I suppose, less drunkenness in Switzerland than in any other country on earth. But Switzerland is far from being a Prohibition state, for drinking there is almost universal. The secret is simply that in Switzerland light, slight intoxicants are much encouraged and sparingly taxed, and so the people feel no need for the expensive, heavily tariffed whiskey, brandy and gin. Likewise, in Switzerland, perversions of our natural instincts exist to but a very limited extent, though of laws against them there are none.

Our total failure to cope with the drinking problem in the United States, Germany's total failure, by means of barbarous laws, to solve its sex difficulties, must convince us at last that man's most intimate and individual desires cannot be curbed or broken by governmental action. The Germans have learned this and

their laws will be repealed. We ourselves must soon view serious public need, as the only justification of state interference with individual freedom.

IX

I sat on the deck of a great German liner, and I was filled with the essence of a hundred colorful experiences in six European countries, and mellowed, perhaps a little saddened, by the perfect calm of the sealife with its lack of letters, telephones, subways, clocks, dirt, and business thoughts. There I wrote these rough hewn stanzas:

We move so tenderly
Across the sea
That surely God can scarcely hear.

Back from our bow
We toss the great blue ocean
So calmly, quietly, that now
With scarce a motion
The foam becomes a cloud
Wrapping our stern up in a trembling shroud.

There is no fear,

For all is calm, warm blue
Ensheathed in some
Strange, warm, yet greying sunlight.
So little motion is there in the sea
That from us, too,
Activity, ambition, hate and passion flee,
Our spirits soar
And we become
Half less than men, half more.

It had been a fascinating trip and joyfully I recalled the mighty moments of which every fine experience is composed, as I sat in the centre of my three deck-chairs, two of them heaped high with books and manuscript. The homeward travel was contributing its share of pleasure, particularly in its possibilities of acquaintance with characters typical, I suppose, of all ocean voyages, but interesting no less.

There was quaint young Miss French of an exotic type so very different in Americans from its evidence in European women. With us it is queerly often chained to Puritanism, and very seldom visualized in vice. Often, in both cases, it is the effect of a too unmixed ancestry,

but here it seldom represents an effort at artistic living.

Americans rarely live literature and that is one of the reasons our books are so bad. We do not believe our authors; we look to them for amusement or information but never for judgments. Therefore it is that our feminine exotics, although fine and gentle, are neither subtle nor artistic.

So it was that these primary, appropriate characteristics were not to be found in Ferlé French. With an instinct for individuality, she was prevented by fear and training and inheritance from developing more than a semblance of it. There were in her consciousness her parents' obviously frequent warnings against "experience"; the training of a "finishing school"—one of those institutions which complete, not the education of their attendants, but their possibility of education—and the inheritance of a good American ancestry. There is so much of the negative in such a type that it rarely resorts to resistance against environment. Miss French's mind might carry her to pastures new, to fresh associations and ideas and undreamed possibilities, but there would

always be the long arm, not of coincidence, but of convention, to restrain her. American exotic girls are almost always so: there is not in them the necessity for self-expression that makes some European women able to establish themselves as imaginative realists in the midst of our world of unimaginative romanticists. Instinct and power are completely dissevered.

Among the other passengers I discovered Mrs. Schumann, who appeared morning and evening in another startling gown, but always together with the same well-known and impressive German. Knowing that they were not related, all the passengers attended to them and conversed about them. As was proper, Mrs. Schumann proved to be the sublimation of the dilettante: in touch with painting, music and the drama, but deeply touched by none. Her gowns were art objects. Her coiffure was a work of art. Her mind, as I have said of George Moore's, was the student of her senses and her senses were the motive power of her mind. Never commonplace, never fundamental, always interested, but with a mild skepticism, she cared for beauty without allowing it to act quite as a motive power or

granting it a prime significance. I asked if she had written anything. "Stories, once or twice," I was informed, "I do not like most poetry; I am too real." But there was insufficient power of expression and not the willingness to labor. Life was enough, and life to her was clear and clever prose; it was unnecessary for her to write in either form.

The commonplace types offered themselves for inspection—and attention: teachers out for their first great holiday; business men, always true to their trade, even in a week of enforced idleness; college girls, masculinized and athletic, but as ineffectual as the women of earlier generations—all the fatuous world of mediocrity, unenlivened, uninspired by the vastness, the calmness, the sunniness, the eternal glory of being afloat on a vacant water-world.

I turned back thoughtfully to my visits to resplendent feminae of the old world.

There was dark vibrant Hortense, whom I found in Switzerland—a brown bundle of artistic genius wandering across Europe with a kindly old mother, who gave her no chance for activity. Mistress of three languages, she was conversationally starved. Powerful with

pencil and brush, she had been kept from work to entertain her parent, and confined to the polite, extravagant inanities, first in Berlin, then on the Riviera, now in Switzerland. I came, and we feasted intellectually together for three entire days. I have never talked so much. We played upon each other's mental pianos whole symphonies of chatter about all things imaginable: art and literature and politics and personalities and problems and the inevitable Sex. I think we Americans talk more of sex than any nation on the earth; abroad they are less afraid of it and so they have better means of expression.

In London, I had left Deidre and Maire, lovely goddesses from over the Irish Sea. Deidre, despite her name with its centuries of sorrowful associations, was a gladsome Irish lassie, sunny and brave, with a bit of religion and traditionalism to mellow her. Maire was a keen mind set behind a rarely lovely physiognomy. She thought, quite interestingly, that women often respond to our male emotional demands in order to gain the fruits of men's mentality. Her mind was analytic and she craved men's syntheses so that she could dis-

sect them. That is why, more than for any other reason, Maire was not great in her art of acting. She understood her parts so well she could never be hypnotized by them. The dramatist's must be a conscious intellect, but the actor fails unless he is much of the mystic.

X

Because the working class in Germany is without dignity the upper classes are brilliant with formalities. The differentiation is extreme. The poor, for example, never hesitate to accept tips. Even conductors are glad to have an extra *Pfennig* with your fare. The man who enlightens you about locations pockets with calmness any little trifle you are good enough to bestow. Only the porters and *Gepaecktraeger* frown and vociferously remonstrate if you give them too little.

But the rich—the official classes—they are glorious! When you visit a German government official, your card is handed through three porters, and you yourself through as many doorways. Finally you come into the benign presence and a portrait of the Emperor glares superciliously at your crude Americanism.

The *Excellenz* (or perhaps only *Regierungsrat*) bows slowly and low, offers you his hand, bows once more, you find yourself seated and the conference begins. At its end there is a mutual bowing, another handshake, still another bowing and "*Auf Wiedersehen.*"

Fortunately, I met my most impressive German acquaintances under more favorable circumstances. It would have been more than my American simplicity could stand to have been treated officially by Count von Bernstorff only two days from New York, even on a summer sea; and Professor Haeckel, being simple and fine and revolutionary himself, met me as an American comrade who needed no formality.

Bernstorff is a diplomat of the new sort—school one might say, I suppose. The hour I met him we stood on deck watching the porpoises jump and dive, sail a few feet under water and then cut through to the surface again. "One wonders why they act that way," said Germany's Ambassador, "but then one never can tell why the porpoise jumps without being a porpoise." The political philosophy of the man was there: there must be thorough understanding without recrimination. He was

critical of details in the present order, but he scarcely questioned its fundamentals.

Bristling moustaches, a fine carriage and courtesy, yet a stiffness and brusqueness to some, together with the definiteness of thorough masculinity were the major apparent characteristics of the man. A universal kindness was not to be looked for, but neither was there the smooth perfection of the Disraeli type. Modern diplomacy is clear cut. It depends less on finesse; not so much upon doing things as knowing when not to do them. "Our young men get into trouble by talking too much," he said. "When we are quoted we have to deny everything."

Vast silences had become the keynote of his conversation; eternal care, eternal vigilance must have been his self imposed rule of conduct.

Professor Haeckel was so very different: a gentle, white-bearded radical, odorous with old-worldliness.

We all have intimates among those pedantic folk who entertain their friends by choosing from the world's great men and women him or her whom they regard as the greatest sci-

entist, painter, writer or sovereign in any particular period of the world's history. We have probably ourselves, each of us, been asked to name men whom we would place among the unquestionably great. I attempted to do as much not long ago and found it quite impossible to omit the name of Haeckel from contemporary science and philosophy. In the latter field, he surely ranks with James and Bergson and H. G. Wells, even though he is not so liberally expressive of the special standpoint of our generation; as a biologist he comes close to Darwin and is peerless among the men of his own time.

One hesitates, very properly, to make affirmations of this sort. But those of which I am guilty force themselves upon any of us: they are among those self-evident generalizations which are ripe for acceptance.

Thus it is that most of us accept Haeckel as a tremendous figure in the modern world, and we accept him silently, knowing little about him, having read little of his work. We learn extensively, each year more and more, of the personality, of the manner of working of the

other masters of the century: Rodin, Strauss, Shaw, Maeterlinck, Zuloaga and the rest. But Haeckel has remained deeply obscured and severed from the world in the tiny village of Jena where pilgrims come once, or perhaps twice, a week, from anywhere across the world, to touch hands and consciousness with the master.

Jena is a village in which we should naturally picture Haeckel: it is too quaintly old for a genuine modern, too filled with age-old atmosphere, too lacking in the obvious improvements of twenty years. But Jena is a town wherein we can imagine a radical of the last generation growing from boyhood into manhood, marrying, settling down after traveling around the world for years, for the last quarter of his century of life, in the unchanged house where he may first have dreamed of the vast and glittering immortalities that have come into his mind and have been given to the world.

I was thrilled, merely to be in Jena, where strangely colored frame and stucco houses bolstered each other in little narrow streets that had never been altered since their Medieval

birth. I lived in a hotel that had been the stopping place of Martin Luther, and nearby were the houses where Schiller and Goethe had dwelt. I had come for the purpose of seeing Haeckel; a friend had telegraphed to him and so we determined to go at once. Our carriage drove through the market-place and passed a picturesque old inn where a dozen students in variegated caps (according to their fraternities) had appropriated the barmaid and were drinking, singing, and frolicking in the yard. One of them would bawl out a German chorus now and then, but no one minded, it was quite the regular thing.

When we alighted at the narrow cobbled lane on which Haeckel has lived for half a century, we were unable to find No. 7, so we had to inquire at No. 13.

"Oh, sie wollen Herrn Professor Haeckel?" exclaimed the woman. Her voice glowed with a warmth that Americans, having no great men, seldom possess.

Haeckel's little house is not quite altogether without change. Going into the hall one finds a resplendent, black, cast-iron stove that can

not date back earlier than 1890, but this has flounced down in the midst of a hallway that surely has not been more than painted in half a century. But one gains something of the ancientness of spirit, to counteract the effect of the stove, from a ten minute walk down the narrow, pebbly lane on which the house has its only exit. Everything but the stove is genuinely old, even to the little waiting maid who tells you "*Excellenz wird sofort kommen*" and climbs with you into the library where you spend ten minutes looking at a set of Goethe, a hundred or so travel books and the shelf of Haeckel's volumes set between flaming water colors that he made in biological moments in the tropics. There, also, you may see the weird, grey picture, reproduced so often all over the world, of Gabriel Max's missing link family, or whatever it is called. It depends greatly upon your mood whether you take the three figures to be monkeys or men. No one can tell for certain which they more resemble.

Haeckel came after a wait of fifteen minutes. We looked at each other and were friends. Haeckel is seventy-eight. He is white-haired, white-bearded, and his blue eyes

have the twinkle of one who has worked hard and calmly, keeping his sense of humor and yet not allowing it to interfere with his work. Only the day before he had been visited by an East Indian who asked permission to translate *The Riddle of the Universe* into Hindoo and who promised the sale of a million copies in India—although there had been only a hundred thousand sold in England. We talked of art and travel and Monism and “our friends in America who think as we do.” Then, with difficulty, Haeckel inscribed for us a photograph of himself standing beside the large orang-outang in his museum and afterwards I visited the museum and photographed the orang-outang alone. I took a few photographs of Haeckel at his table and desk and on his little second-floor piazza, and as we left the house I snatched a spray of elm leaves that I knew would be treasured by one of “our friends in America.”

Haeckel is so sweet, when he hobbles in to meet you, that your admiration melts in wholesome warmth. When he takes your hand you may help him over to the long sofa on which he is forced to recline since his fall from

a bookshelf a few years ago, that has made it impossible for him to walk alone and very difficult for him to work. His fine gray eyes glint expectantly in the center of the great masses of white hair that surround his face; and all is serene and beautiful.

A labor of love and a love of labor seemed the keynotes of his life and the secret of his accomplishment. The great sorrow of Haeckel's advancing age is that he cannot work any more. His personal affairs have gone ahead in quietness and calm; his struggle has been on the battlefield of ideas. And, now that the fight is won and he is ready to pass on to fresh conquests, age lays a bare white finger on his arm and says "No, you have done enough. Rest and watch. Sit still and give the world a chance to catch up."

After an hour of talk about the universe that is still a riddle, a kindly and radiant farewell, you march down the pebbly lane while Haeckel waves from the balcony on which you have taken his picture.

THE TIRED BUSINESS MAN AND THE TIRELESS WOMAN

Labor is one of the keynotes of American life. Capital is the other. Far more than they do in Europe, these factors create our national characteristics and phenomena. Abroad there is a variety of Social Classes. There are the dukes, marquises, barons and knights. Few of these labor and fewer possess capital. They are a true leisure class. But in America our leisure class is the most busy.

It is very creditable over here to be busy. Even an artist may be almost respectable if he is thoroughly occupied—this is, if he is without time for contemplation or inspiration. The respect in which busyness is held has created a nation-wide competition to accomplish a reputation for it. The leisure classes are naturally in the lead, because they have the most time in which to become busy.

A generation ago, before so many men occupied themselves with the arduous labors of coupon-clipping and “taking care” of their estates, our women were our chief leisure class.

It is true that some of them darned socks, turned out an occasional dress for their own wear, bore children, did a bit of housework and cooking now and then, but these can scarcely be regarded as adequate occupations in a busy world like ours. They were accomplished easily in the sixteen waking hours and entirely in the home. (One hopes that no more than the necessary eight hours were wasted in sleep.)

Today this condition is entirely altered. Women have become the busiest, and therefore, naturally the most respected part of the community. They have added to their former activities the nerve-racking and very tiring work of tri-weekly or often daily shopping tours. In these the not-to-be-overemphasized task of selecting suitable apparel for morning, afternoon, evening and night, with all accessories to match, has been thrust upon them in lieu of the simple difficulty of the former generation which merely consisted in suiting the apparel to the pocket-book. Now this mundane and disreputable consideration of finances has come to be properly disregarded and only the questions of beauty, style, workmanship,

color-tone in relation to personality and like high-minded matters come up for debate.

Similarly we have the substitution of the new type of dance for the old waltz and two-step. A generation ago women regarded dancing as a great delight and engaged in it on one evening or two in a week. Now dancing has been established, not only as one of the fine arts, but more especially as an important form of exercise. So we have it engaged in daily, and instead of employing the late evening hours, when the body is supposed to be fatigued, we have the fresh luncheon time and afternoon devoted to this excellent occupation. Time is economized by lunching right in the dance-hall and dancing between courses. The drinking of whisky, gin and the like, which is reputed to be an accompaniment of these wholesome athletics, is merely the using of a few slight stimulants or digestives such as are commonly found necessary by very active people. So the *thé dansant* has become an acceptable and revered national institution. It we have seized upon it with an avidity that astonishes the French, who first introduced the scheme, that must merely be attributed to our

American ambition to reap the full benefit of an institution as soon as we have discovered it is good. That is what we did with our protective tariff, and it is what we are doing with our "anti-vice" crusades.

And in this latter connection we must not forget our women. Speaking, agitating, starting up societies, offices, newspapers, publishing pamphlets, holding meetings, they have quite revolutionized American life and thought, as it relates to the one great Vice that interests them. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings cometh truth—on this subject above all others. Every virgin can discuss venereal diseases and the statistics of prostitution are commonplaces of drawing-room conversation. We can easily imagine what labor had to be put forth to bring this about.

And so it is with the vote. What men had come to regard as a mere incidental to smooth existence, a means to the end of gaining greater leisure for other things, women proved to be a wonderful way to extreme and vigorous activity in and for itself. The vote became an end, something to fight for, die for, get

divorced for. Its significance was immediately felt.

And so it is all along the line. The unimportant things have sprung into prominence, the means have become ends, the incidentals are now essentials. All of which has supplied infinite activity to those who were supposed to be leisured, or at least to have no more trying tasks than being mothers and teachers, friends, home-makers and the like.

Now, what has occurred on the other side? Man, who had come to take his vote lightly, to regard dancing as an occasional amusement for leisured evenings, and prostitution as an inheritance of the ages, an inevitable complement and accompaniment of marriage, man has been jerked up suddenly by his supposed lesser, if better, half. His newspapers, his magazines, his drama, his clergymen and lectures all assure him that he been wasting his time. To what have his days been given, and his nights?

First of all, he has generally been taking his full allotment of slumber. Then, rising to a plentiful breakfast, he has journeyed townwards at 8.30 or at 9.00 to attend to the routine work of telephone messages, letter dictat-

ing, personal interviews and the rest, broken conveniently at 12 or 1 by a refreshing hour with a friend or two at lunch. Then followed the more leisurely afternoon, with a pleasant walk, a drink or two, and the return home in time for dinner. Of course, during his busiest season, there may not have been more than half an hour at luncheon, and the worries of the morning may have extended over into the afternoon. But they were usually broken by a variety of activities that rendered even the most irksome, interesting.

Such is the man's life—corresponding to the woman's that has been described. Neither is that of the very poor, for the poor of either sex must never be mentioned as typical of our great American commonwealth. They are an unimportant occurrence, an incidental to the production of capital—the eighty millions of them—what the biologists would call a “sport,” or a variation from type, as regards the glorious life of our excellent country.

No, there must be no poor, and if there are poor, we must simply forget it. The middle and upper classes only are representative.

And in these, the women are carrying the

burden of activity. They have made themselves most admirably busy. They have filled the moments to overflowing and have fixed things so that when they too come home at night, the tiredness of their husbands shall be as nought compared with their own. So, very properly, the plays of the tired business man are passing out of our theatres, and we have instead the plays of the tirelessly busy woman: the plays which treat of her and the subjects she agitates, which discuss, condemn and moralize as she discusses, condemns and moralizes during the day. We call it a great moral awakening.

In such an awakening can there fail to be benefit? One never knows. Woman will get the vote, as she certainly should, if it amuses her to have it. Woman is already able to smoke and drink like the veriest male. These habits will harm her little, for she, like her sons and fathers, will learn moderation with practice. Then also, she has achieved the freedom of the mouth: she may talk as she pleases and be proper none the less. And that is as it should be; for the cure for the evils of freedom is still more freedom. It is well that

woman should be a bit busy, and that man should realize that he doesn't really work himself to death for the sake of his beloved; it is well that the stage should abandon a few of its musical comedies in favor of even the stupidest sex discussion, and that the pulpit should substitute sociology for some of the ethics that have no longer any weight. Whether the millenium is coming through all of it is another matter.

THE UNMARRYING MODERN MALE

The "old bachelor" of the last generation is a commonplace of second-rate farces and old women's conversations. Mildly expressed, he is unpromising material for either, and impossible for literary exploitation. In fact, the clever have given him up even in discourse and so he is gradually passing out of existence. Untalked of types do that; just as the reverse occurs with types that attain widespread discussion. It is possible, for example, that the army of the prostitutes will be inflated by the hundred recent articles and volumes dealing with them.

But although the no longer interesting bachelor is ceasing, many men continue to refrain from marriage and the growing group that does so is naturally typified in the few that possess definite characteristics. One realizes, most especially, what these new bachelors are not. Physically they are not large-stomached animals with thick lips, hairless heads, protruding eyes, livid complexions, bad digestions and flapping hands. In other words, they have not the easily recognizable qualities of their

predecessors. Similarly this new clan is not fat-headed, hot-headed or pig-headed; nor does it snore unduly, finger its female acquaintances, nor play cards three evenings a week.

The motive power of this modern group is at the same time noble and petty, and its attitude is cowardly and brave. It is fearful of woman and fearless of all else. It is an interesting body because it is interested in all things. It fears neither wealth nor poverty, success nor failure, but the men who make it up insist that whatever the result of their aspirations may be, it shall be for them, for them as free individualities without obligations save as they choose to assume them and as they are free to discard them again.

Obviously such men cannot, under the present customs of society, publicly assume the positions of fathers and husbands. The moment the marriage service is considered there at once looms up the vision of a host of duties and restrictions enforced in each case by its appropriate and dire penalty. Clearly as we may recognize the growing facility with which divorce may be secured and the increasing ease with which liasons may be consummated;

readily as we admit the growing independence and individuality of the husband and wife as such; society is still very, very far from providing for the man as mate and father, and for the woman as mate and mother, and for the child also, a position that may be regarded as primary. All are as yet secondary types, types without a recognized, separate, individual purpose in life, and therefore types composed of men and women who, insofar as they are typical, are without encouragement or provision for free and genuine self-expression.

Against this condition the thoroughly modern male unequivocally rebels. He rebels against the convention that prescribes that if he is rich he shall strive eternally to be richer so that his wife may fulfill each new contrivance for spending ever more and more. He rebels against the convention which limits his companionship according to the abilities or needs or fancies of his arch companion. Chiefly and most deeply is his rebellion directed against the demand that his method of work, the kind and manner of his amusement, the time of his slumber and the nature of his food be dominated by another human being, no mat-

ter how intimately connected with him she may be.

The struggle of the modern man is an effort to reachieve those inherent, natural liberties without which life becomes existence and effort turns into the dead pursuit of an unvalued goal.

These new men realize in themselves the ardent need for a freedom that once was man's but that he has allowed to lapse, as woman's position has developed from a secondary into a primary one. For today, however subordinate she may be as wife and mother (in that her own personality is not her prime concern in these capacities), woman as woman is rapidly becoming a first-rate type. As such she is represented typically by the "new woman" who has been so frequently discussed as to be almost understood.

The new man is the member of society who best understands the new woman. He becomes her friend and her helper; he encourages her in her self-affirmation; he interprets her to the rest of the world and analyses the half-understood ideals that she is trying to

express. Beyond that, his rebellion starts, for he refuses to support her or her children, or to sacrifice to them his primary purposes as a human being.

As yet the new woman continues to make the demands of the old-fashioned type. She insists that her motherhood shall be clothed with marriage and, in general, that support shall be given and sacrifice made to her. But since the latter demand is already lessening, it is likely that even the former will be some day relinquished, and then a perfectly free and fundamental equality may arise. Until then, the war of the sexes must remain a fact and the woman movement must be partial and inconsistent.

THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

There probably is not a single person in the entire world who, if his time could all be spent in thinking and his mind were adequate to the solution of any problem, would not set himself, sooner or later, to finding out what expression his personality required and how that could most effectively be accomplished. That is the same as saying that about the most interesting question for all the world not absorbed in burrowing for tomorrow's breakfast is what the world needs, individually and collectively, together with information as to how it has been getting at this, and how it can be helped to do so better in the future.

Some men tell us that our chiefest need is a condition of mind and body presumed to be appropriate for life in a universe other than that of our only assured existence; although the army of these is not so great or stern to-day as in some earlier centuries. These anachronistic folk need not concern themselves with the fitness of their plan of living for the conditions of our lifetime since their interests lie confessedly beyond death. To them it is

rightfully more important to render men kings beyond the Styx than to free them from being slaves beside the Hudson. And so to the teaching of these good men, of whatever faith or creed, belong the modified but still persistent moralities of the ages and the handed down conventions that control our lives.

But although we of the majority adhere to these moralities and bear with these conventions, we are not, any longer, concerned importantly with the purpose of those who gave these ethics to mankind. The chief intent of us of earthly attitude—the majority—is not a fitting preparation for a kingdom that is not of this world, but a working method for a democracy that is. And so it comes about that we shirkers of activity who devote our energies to thought are realizing that some of man's noblest, most accredited principles are survivals of an earlier time, inspired by a viewpoint totally dissimilar to our own.

The obvious moralities, all, in fact, upon observation prove to be the product of the early age of faith, when mankind tossed on the bed of infancy—and not a bed of roses was it, with the massacres and incest and the lack of com-

fort and intelligence that prevailed. Such modifications as exist today were merely grafted on the teachings of the earliest prophets of all countries who all, peculiarly enough, taught quite the same moralities. The age of these dogmatic dictates has, most strangely, been accepted as an argument for their continuance and truth. It is as if we insisted on the powers of the good-luck-giving swastika simply because it has been found everywhere since the dawn of history. Fortunately, however, the unamended acceptance of the principles has been confined in a measure to argument: in practice, an always growing portion of each succeeding generation has dealt with life solely as its own intelligence directed.

This practice—this revolutionary non-adherence to the dogmatism of the dead—appears to have been responsible for every single contribution made by advancing civilization. Broadly speaking, the arts and the sciences have alone created the advance; and these are in their inmost and essential nature totally unmoral. The joining of all portions of mankind, at first by shipping, then by railroads, then by cables and the telegraph and last of all

by the telephone, the wireless and the aeroplane, all of this mighty conquest of inimical nature, has come down to us without relation to the principles of the prophets or the fussings of the fathers. Incidentally, certainly, some sciences have helped to bring about more unity among the species—a condition desired by the moralists—but the accomplishments themselves and the true and fundamental viewpoint of those who helped to furnish them was utterly, superbly separated from the wranglings of the *raisonneurs*.

Likewise in the perfection of the machinery that has given us undreamed of comforts, in the home, the street, the warehouse, factory, field and farm—all totally unmoral, all in essence quite unethical. And most of all in art! Pictures, poems, stories, plays, figures in bronze and marble, music of dances, songs and symphonies—every authentic one of them pouring forth with the divine sweat of its creator quite regardless of heaven and hell! Of course the pictures dealt with madonnas and magi and the poems used plentifully the name of the Father and the Child, but only for the

sake of the Master and the God of all, Art; and because the people of the world could understand and read and see only if art expressed itself in those forms that regrettably obsessed the world.

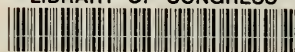
What did it matter in the great eternal march of things whether Galileo believed in Purgatory, or Leonardo loved his friend's wife, or Shakespeare was homogenic, or Lincoln swore? These men had thoughts to give, seeds to sow, creations to hand down, all of them of unquestionable, palpable, self-evident value to the race. Naturally the prejudices and conventions of their times could hamper them, or even, in some terrible periods of history, quite silence them, and so destroy their message or their gift, but fundamentally, essentially, is not their just relation to all historic faiths and all moralities the same relation as Pegasus might be conceived as bearing to his trappings? They could control him, make him fall or stumble in his flight, but the sublime and glory-smitten impetus came from another source and could not be created by the most elaborate and best fitting livery.

So it is that the conventional, unquestioning morality and mental attitude of the majority appears to-day peculiarly unfitted to the solution of the great problem which the majority seem ready to accept as their most urgent care: the finding out of what the worldly purpose of man is and how this may be best fulfilled. It is not a matter of throwing over the vast virtues we are told to-day to value. It is not a simple rejection of religion or of law. Freedom to think is the essential: the clarifying of our mental processes by the removing of impeding prejudices from our minds—then it makes little difference whether or not we live according to their present dictates. We shall never achieve a world of geniuses. We can, however, spread the attitude of genius, the creative attitude of the arts and sciences; we can substitute this, and we must, for the conventional negations. Let the minds of the world be free and we may well believe that Life will walk the roads most suited to its welfare. And thought and faith and speculation on the future and the past, the desirable and the ill, will not be dead, but will be following as servants

in the train of Life, not clutching at its throat with the fingers of dogma; while on will sweep the army, ever faster, through the slaveless kingdom that, completely and imposingly, is, is of this world.



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